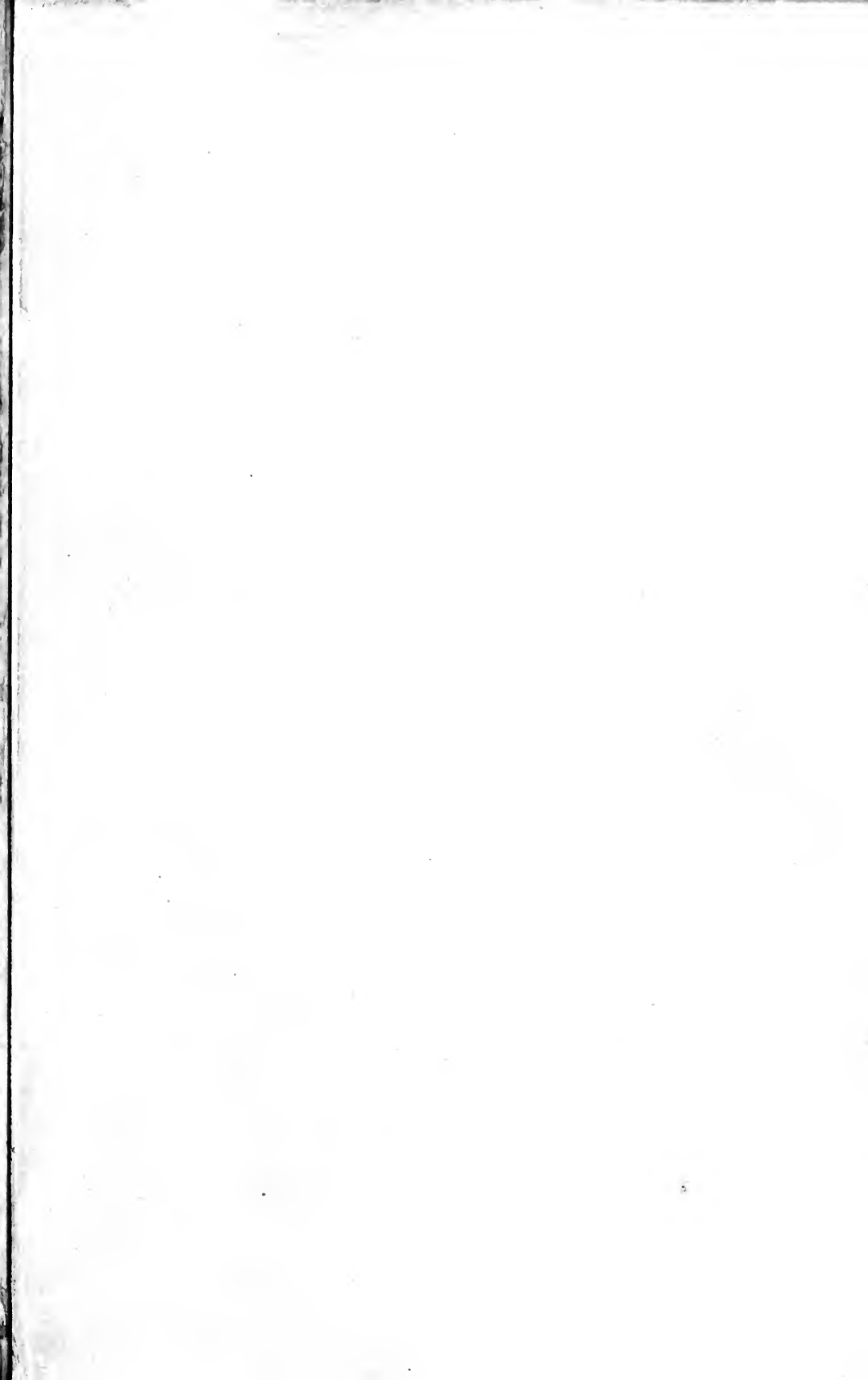


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THE THEATRE.

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A Monthly Review

OF THE

DRAMA, MUSIC, AND THE FINE ARTS.

EDITED BY

CHARLES EGLINGTON.

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(NEW SERIES.)

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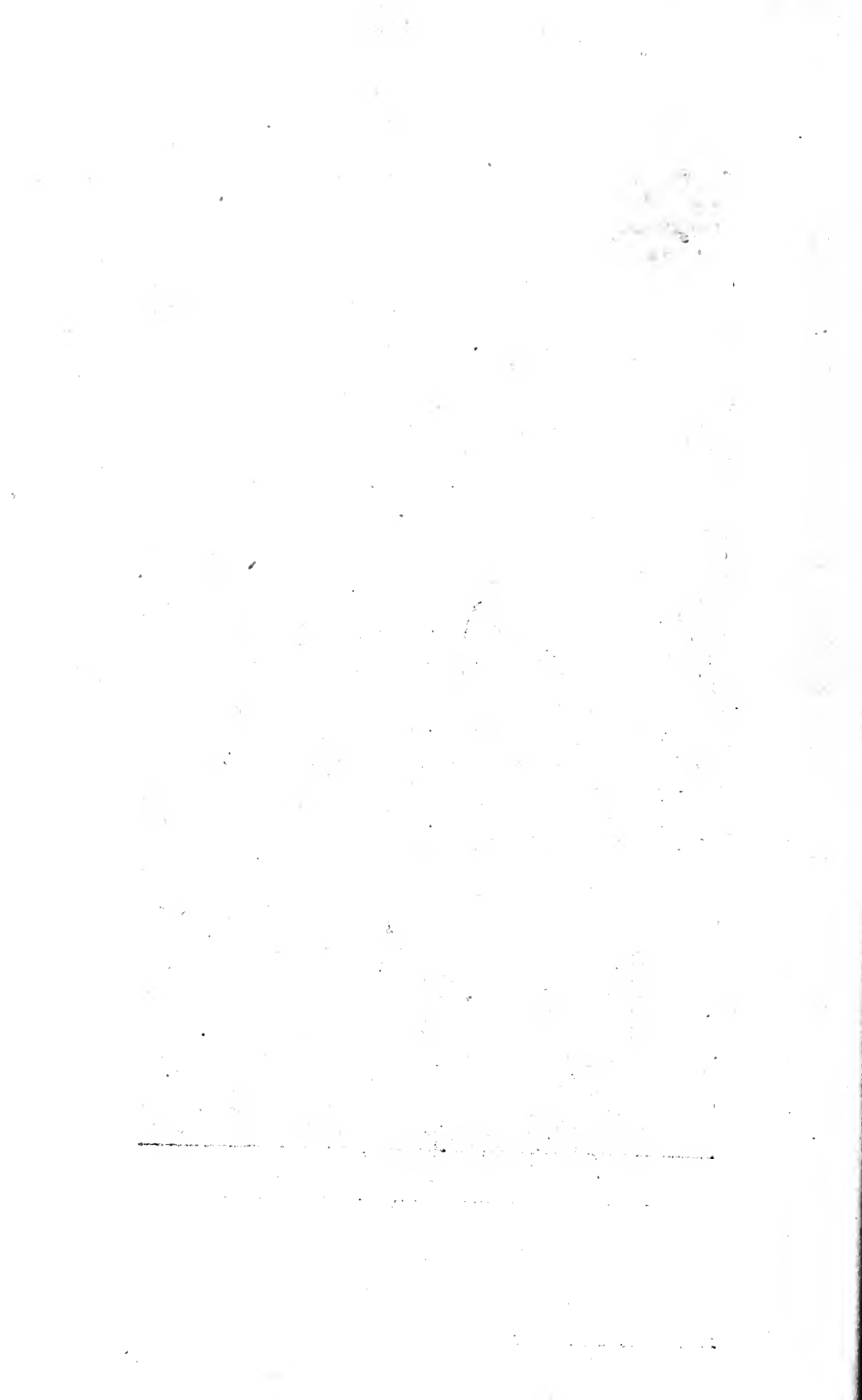
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*"HA! HA! HA!" By St. George Hare, R.I.
Exhibited at the Institute of Painters in Oil Colours, 1892.*



THE THEATRE.

JANUARY, 1893.

Their Reason.

BY NORA VYNNE.



AN LANGTON stopped short in the street with an emphasis that made his friend Maguire stop with him, and looked half-angrily, half-contemptuously at a big, heavily-built man, who came very slowly out of a large draper's shop opposite and stopped at the street corner.

"A little too early in the evening for a man to be clinging to a lamp-post?" suggested Maguire, lightly.

"That's a trifle; at least, a trifle compared to the rest. Do you know that is Peggie Lee's husband; I can't understand it."

"I could understand any man's being Peggie Lee's husband who had the chance," said Maguire carelessly.

"Yes, but not his letting her go on being Peggie Lee of the 'Frip.' That's what puzzles me. I can't understand it. Why does he not make her leave the stage? Yes, I know what you are going to say—there's no reason why he should. But I say there is great reason! If she was a different sort of woman, I would say nothing, but she is the sort of woman who needs guiding—guarding."

"The sort of woman who needs guarding is the sort of woman whom it is no use to guard," said Maguire, "and Peggie is not that sort of woman."

"I know she means no harm, but she ought not to have a crowd of idiots round her. She can't help flirting with them. She's a flirt by nature!"

"She is," said Maguire, "I've seen her flirt even with her own husband sooner than not flirt at all, which, I take it, is proof there is no harm in her."

"You needn't tell me that! She's a good woman, but she is in a position that would hurt any woman. I would say nothing if she were at a better house, but the 'Frip' is just the worst sort of house. Old Castel likes to have a crowd of idiots hanging round Peggie; he encourages that sort of thing, and he thinks nothing of her reputation."

"He would say, 'That's her business.'"

"I say it is her husband's business ! She is a thoughtless child, but as for him, what is to be said of a man who will act as he is acting ? Do you know be used to make a lot of money on the Stock Exchange. He used to go in for athletics, too. He went in for society, too ; one met him everywhere. After he was married he gave up his business and all his old friends. Now he just loaf—simply loaf—while Peggie earns the income. What do you call such conduct as that ?"

"Unlike you," said Maguire, "I don't characterise it, because, like you, I don't understand it. I used to know him, and he was a gentleman then, so I should say he is one now."

"I should not say so ; I should not apply that much ill-used and mis-used word to any man who let his wife continue on the boards of a house under the management of old Castel, playing such pieces as he produces to such an audience as he can attract."

"You are too hard all round," said Maguire, "They none of them mean any harm. My experience of life is that no one means any harm to any great extent. I rather like old Castel. His English is so pretty ; Peggie says that in this piece they are playing he never knows whether she is stabbed with a dagger, or dagged with a stabber. As for Peggie's stage-door friends, I doubt if she is any the worse for them, or they for her. Just now her first favourite is that boy Galt."

"Who is an ill-conditioned lout," said Langton.

"Yes, so ill-conditioned that he'll be the better for even Peggie's training, and as for that shy Australian who goes about with Galt, Peggie told me herself that she liked him because he was so good. You should not take anything seriously until you understand it—and then you won't."

They had been walking slowly, and the man whose wife and conduct they had been discussing, was still in front of them. He stopped short, leaning as before against a lamp-post, and called a cab. Langton laughed contemptuously—

"No wonder he grows heavy ! It's only a step to Tewson's."

"What's Tewson's ?"

"A second, or third, or fourth-rate sort of place in M—— Street, where he goes every evening to play billiards with the marker while his wife is earning the income, and entertaining her friends under old Castel's guardianship."

"We had better have a hansom, too, hadn't we," suggested Maguire, "or we shall be late, that is if we are going to the 'Frip' ? Are we ?"

They were—they very generally were.

* * * * *

Peggie was entertaining, as Langton had put it, in her dressing-room. At least it was a dressing-room technically, a little sitting-room in point of fact. Old Castel had taken care it should be suitably arranged for the reception of visitors, for it was quite true he did like to have a little crowd of admirers round Peggie. He made a spoiled pet of her. From a business point of view she was his mainstay, and apart from business he had a real admiration for her. "Dear

child," he told her almost daily, "You are a loss to France. *Tu n'es pas seulement une femme, tu es une Française.*" And as *La Femme* and *La France* were the only things in which he had any belief, this was very high praise indeed.

On this particular evening, young Galt and his shy friend from Australia were in Peggie's room with Nannie White, who was very much younger and prettier than cynics would have expected the woman friend of a professed coquette to be. The three had been talking carelessly enough when Peggie came in, a con-



"Peggie came in, a confusion of white satin and black eyelashes."

fusion of white satin and black eyelashes. Peggie was a small, childish woman, with a child's wistful eyes, and a child's dignity and wilfulness. She was not what is technically called a lady, but what in the world does it matter whether such a charming little creature as she was is a lady or not. She was very pretty and very sweet ; and that was enough.

"Where have you been ?" asked Nannie, "You were dressed ever so long ago."

"I've been calling on a friend," said Peggie, dropping into a chair by the fire, and laughing, "I thought you would all excuse me. I have been calling on a friend I'm very fond of."

"You just say that to make us jealous," said Galt with a rudeness that would have been unpardonable if it had not been so stupid. "You're always talking about people you're fond of. I don't believe it!"

"No," laughed Peggie, "you like to think I am not fond of anybody but you! That's your mistake you know! I am very fond of this friend, but you needn't mind, because she is a lady. She's the lady who lives up at the top of this exceedingly ill-built edifice and cleans the passages. She has her trials," and Peggie dropped into mimicry of the old woman's tone, "she 'as 'er trials, indeed. Everything appears to be a trial to her, chiefly her son, who is a great trial. He won't go to school, and then the School Board man comes and bullies her, and then she cries all day, and then I go upstairs in the evenings after I am dressed to comfort her a little—that pleases her; and then she tells me how nice I look—and that pleases me."

"Oh, if that sort of thing pleases you——" said Galt.

"Of course it does—I like it very much. It is quite a grief to me that you never pay me compliments. It is no use my being as sweet to you as I know how. You never will own to admiring me in the least."

"That's because you are far too conceited already," said the boy. And his tone was so entirely that of a rough, but affectionate younger brother, that Peggie was half pleased and laughed again—

"Oh, but what did you say to Nannie about me the other day?" she cried mischievously.

The boy turned crimson and stood up, glaring reproachfully at Nannie, who broke into a laugh. "I didn't tell her, really I didn't. It was just a random shot. I didn't betray you, you are betraying yourself."

Peggie looked from one of them to the other, and the lightness died from her face—she looked troubled and old for a minute. The shy Australian boy had been sitting in a corner holding on to his stick with his teeth all the while. Nannie White had risen, and was going towards the door.

"There's our call, Peggie; come along; don't forget your dagger as you did last night! You will want it presently, and have no time to get it."

She ran out, and Peggie looked anxiously round the room.

"Oh dear, I must have left my dagger with the 'lady' upstairs; and I shan't have time to get it."

Both the boys rose. She turned to Galt.

"Do get it, there's a dear soul. It's up the stone stairs at the end of the passage. I'll be so much obliged! I must run off now." And she flew through the door.

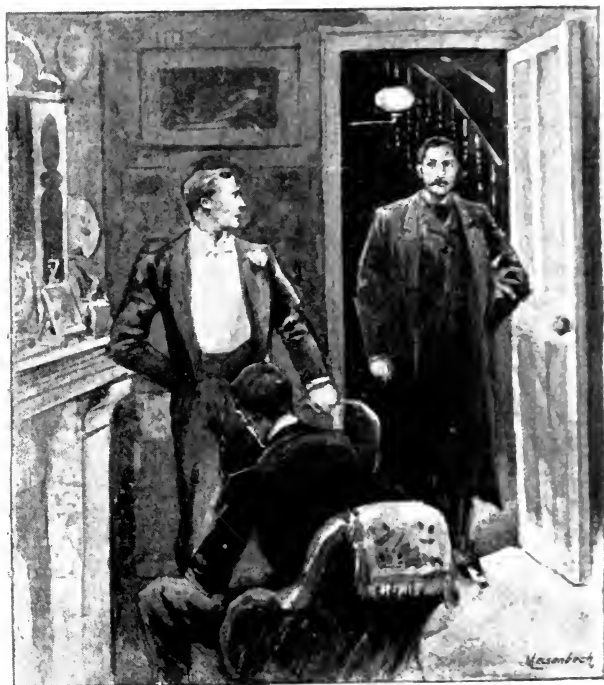
Galt was delighted to be sent on her errands; it proved how "chummy" she was with him. But the silly boy thought it would be grand to profess boredom to his Colonial friend.

"Oh, I say," he drawled, "all the way up those beastly stairs. Confound her dagger, you know ; that's the sort of thing she ought to ask her husband to do."

"I quite agree with you ! It is fortunate I returned in time to save you so much trouble !"

The two young men looked round, astonished. Peggie's husband stood for a moment in the doorway, then turned and disappeared quickly.

"Serve you right, Percy !" said the shy Australian emphatically. Then he shut his mouth tight on his stick. Galt did not speak, he looked miserably ashamed of himself. Presently an elderly man



"The two young men looked round, astonished. Peggie's husband stood for a moment in the doorway."

with a beard came into the room, and began to read a newspaper which he took out of his pocket.

In a few seconds Peggie came back, and flew to the glass to see that her hair was all right. Then she turned to Galt—

"The dagger, please ? I'm so sorry to have troubled you. Why have you not got it ! What is the matter ?"

"Mr. Lattril has gone for it," stammered Galt, looking and feeling very uncomfortable.

"My husband ! I asked you to go, and you let him, you ill—

mannered, ungrateful baby ! What did you mean by that ? Don't you ever dare to come near me again, if it is too much trouble for you to do what I ask. I'll never forgive you ! Never !”

Poor Galt began to falter excuses, but he didn't make much of them. He was dreadfully ashamed. Peggie in a fury, Peggie breathless and panting with rage was even more bewitching than Peggie in a good temper. She seemed one hot bright flame of anger ; her quarrel or her words did not matter in the least. Anger that was so beautiful was bound to be just !

Galt murmured feebly that “ he hadn't meant it ; it wasn't quite his fault.”

“ Yes, it was ! ” she cried ; “ of course it was your fault ! Do you think Bertie would have done what I don't like if it hadn't been some one else's fault ? ”

“ I'll never do it again ! ” the boy said miserably.

“ I'm not angry with you for doing it again, I'm angry with you for doing it this time.” The answer flashed back like the stroke of a knife. “ Do it again, indeed ! Oh, but you don't know what you are doing. No, I'll take care you don't have a chance of doing it again, you rude, lazy, ungrateful baby ! ”

“ Here is your dagger, Peggie ! ”

Lattril had come back. He laid his hand on his wife's shoulders, and at his touch instantly all her anger died out. The change was as complete as if he had turned off the electric light.

“ What an excitable child you are Peggie,” he said, “ You should not scold anybody but me like that, you know ! ”

Peggie crept a little nearer under her husband's touch. It was two big tears that had drowned the fire of her eyes. They rested now on the curling black-lashes.

“ I'm sorry,” she said gently and sweetly, “ I am sorry I am so vulgar and have such a temper ; you know I never was a lady. I don't expect anyone but my husband to be patient with me.”

Then, taking no notice of any of the others, she turned to her husband.

“ How does it happen that you are here so early, Bertie ? Do you want anything ? ”

“ No, I have brought you your gloves. I forgot them in the morning and you said you would want them to-night.”

She drew her straight black eyebrows together.

“ Oh, Bertie, I wish you wouldn't run about for me like that.”

“ I didn't run. I took a hansom.”

The two went out of the room together.

Young Galt stood considering whether he would say anything or not and finally decided not. His shy friend spoke for him.

“ I knew it all the while,” he said in an undertone.

“ Knew what all the while ? ”

“ She's fond of her husband. What's the good of your fooling round here. Come in front.”

Some time later Peggie came back to her room. She looked

worried and anxious, and had to go straight to the glass to make sure her complexion was all right. Then she went and stirred the fire, and sat down in front of it.

She saw the man with the newspaper, and apologised absently for not having noticed him sooner.

"Oh, Mr. Leslie, how rude you must have thought me! Have you been here long?"

"It doesn't matter," he said, "I'm writing 'pars.' about you, and I want to know one or two things, that's all. Never mind just now! You are not looking well, what is the matter?"

"I'm well enough, only I'm tired; I don't think I feel quite as vigorous as usual to-night. I wish it were all over, and time to go home. 'Would it were bed-time and all were well,' who is it says that? I know what it means to-night. Yes, I am very tired."

"What were you quarrelling with that boy Galt about; he has gone away looking very much crushed."

"He is only a boy, is not he?" Peggie asked almost anxiously, "quite a boy—never mind him!" She looked absently into the fire for a moment and then went on "Don't you think this is a very tiring world? I hope I have not done any harm in it. Do you know I really try to be good, though you may not have thought it."

Leslie winced. He had really never thought about it at all. He was suddenly ashamed to realise that she would have pleased him just as well if she had not been good.

"What does it matter what all we think?" he said.

"You mean, so long as Bertie understands? Oh, yes, Bertie is satisfied with me in spite of my horrid temper, and bad manners, and the rest. Bertie is always satisfied."

"He has every reason to be so."

She had been holding up one little half-transparent hand to screen her face from the flames, now she brushed it across her eye-lashes and sprang to her feet with a laugh.

"Ah, you say that because you are not my husband. It is astonishing how tolerant men are of the faults of other men's wives. No one but Bertie would have been patient with me. What did you want me to tell you; can you wait a little? I promised to watch Nannie—she is going to astonish them all to-night; I must go. How cold it is when one leaves the fire. Will you give me my cloak, please? Isn't it there? Then I must have left that upstairs, too. Oh, no—don't rise—I shan't send my visitors on errands any more. That was what all the fuss was about. I'll find some one to send, or go myself. The run upstairs will warm me."

As she turned to the door she found Galt there. He had come back to apologise again. Not knowing what it was she wanted, he could only entreat pathetically, "Let me go, do let me go," but she pushed passed him laughing. They heard her light feet and high heels clattering along the stone passage.

* * * * *

Langton and Maguire came late to the "Frippery" and sat in the

last row of the stalls. It is to be presumed that they enjoyed themselves, or they would not have stayed, but they looked about as cheerful as a teetotal picnic, and did not speak a word to each other, all the while they were there; Peggie was on the stage, and had just stabbed herself to the heart, and was carried off to be re-animated in the next scene by a patent electric apparatus. They did not even pretend to listen to the piece when Peggie was not on, they simply waited for her re-appearance.



"Langton and Maguire came late and sat in the last row of the stalls."

Suddenly each fancied he heard faintly what must have been a shrill cry far off. Each looked at the other to see if he had heard it, and then round the house to see if any one else had. Apparently not, for every one was laughing, and the piece—such as it was—was going on. When, however, at last Peggie should have re-appeared, there was a long wait, and then Monsieur Castel came forward and regretted to inform the house that Miss Lee had had a slight accident, only an idling accident, she would be all right to-morrow, but for to-night—only to-night—the part would be taken by her under-taker."

The audience was sorry for Miss Lee, but since the accident was

only "idling," proceeded to give an encouraging welcome to the "under-taker," and laughed good-naturedly at old Castel's little slips in language.

Langton and Maguire rose.

"We will go and see," said Langton.

Maguire nodded.

"Did you hear anything just now?"

"I fancied so, I certainly heard it just now in Castel's voice.

They went round to the stage door. A doctor's carriage was standing there, and as they entered the doctor came out. They knew him, and spoke without preface.

"What is wrong, Jefferson?"

"It's an awful business," said the doctor, "shocking. That poor girl has fallen down a flight of stone stairs and her back is broken. Nothing can be done. I told them to send for her husband, but no one seems to know where he is to be found, and for some reason she won't tell. They say he always turns up about eleven to take her home; she may live till then."

"Does she know?"

"No. You see she is in no pain. She scarcely realises that she is seriously injured. One of her friends there is going to tell her presently."

"Go in, Langton, and see if you can be of any use," said Maguire, "I don't suppose you can be, but you may as well go. I will fetch Lattril."

He called a cab, and drove to the address Langton had given him earlier in the evening.

Lattril was not "playing billiards with the marker." He was sitting in a shabby chair with his head in his hands, with a half-emptied glass of brandy-and-water beside him. Maguire thought he had been drinking, and laid his hand on his shoulder almost roughly. Lattril looked up.

"What is it?"

"I want you to come to the 'Frip' with me, there has been an accident.

"An accident!" He stood up quickly, clutching at the mantel-piece. Then seeing Maguire's face, added quickly—

"The worst—at once please!"

"The worst is, almost the worst that could be. Mrs. Lattril will speak to you again, but be quick!"

Maguire was by far the more upset of the two. Lattril followed him quite quietly.

"Is she suffering?" he asked, when they were in the cab together.

"No, it is too serious for that. She feels no pain."

The cab rattled along the rough by-streets, and they did not talk. Presently Lattril began to whistle a tune, not a sad tune either, something soft and pleasant. Langton wondered at him, and then was angry.

"You don't seem to care very much!" he said.

"Don't I?" And the tune went on.

Maguire thought of that faint cry in the theatre and of his friend's misery. If the husband did not care, there was one man who did—one at least. The pleasantly-whistled tune maddened him.

"For God's sake stop that!" he said. "Make some pretence of decency if you are heartless! I thought better of you—better than others. You can't but know what others have said of you!"

"Yes, I know. They judged of what they didn't understand. What did it matter?"

But he ceased whistling, and neither spoke again until they reached the theatre.

* * * * *

All that could be done had been done for Peggie. Cushions had been piled on the couch for her, and she lay there white and quiet. Anxious faces showed at the door now and again, and then hurried away. Peggie's friend from upstairs had come to her, but had been turned out of the room because she was useless and cried so. A hospital nurse had been sent for; but they knew even she would be useless when she came.

Old Castel, distracted between his sense of the loss to his theatre and his devotion to his favourite, bewailed her misfortune and his own loss alternately. But he was a man always alive to the sentiment of the situation. A young and beautiful woman was dying, and it was fit that she should die in someone's arms. Whose he did not know, but someone's, certainly. He let in every one who asked admittance, in the hope of finding the right person. Young Galt was there, sobbing in a corner. They had tried to turn him out, but he had refused to go. Langton was still there. He knew he was of no use, but it was some consolation to be there in case he was wanted.

Peggie knew now what had happened to her. Leslie had told her as gently as he could, turning away his face that he might not see the awful despair that rose in her eyes as gradually she understood his words. She had not strength to move or cry out, but she moaned under her breath, and tried to hide her face with her hands.

Old Castel broke down outright, and rushed from the room.

Leslie, feeling himself terribly unfit for the task, tried to comfort her. He could think of nothing to say, but "poor child." He said it again and again, "Poor child, poor child, don't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid! I want Bertie! I want Bertie!"

But you wouldn't let us send for him, my child. Tell us where he is, and we will bring him."

"No, I won't have him hurried or startled, I will wait till he comes! But I want him so! What time is it? What time is it—is it nearly eleven?"

Then seeing poor young Galt's misery, she spoke to him, "Don't cry so, Mr. Galt. It wasn't your fault, I am not angry with you now. How could you know why I did not want Bertie to run upstairs?"

Stop crying, there's a good boy, and I'll promise never to scold you again. Oh, I forgot. Of course, I shall never scold anyone again !”

The poor lad, who was good-hearted for all his ill-manners, threw himself on his knees by the sofa, and tried to stifle his sobs in the cushions. A troubled look rose in her eyes.

“Is it my fault you care so much ? I'm sorry ; I did not mean it ! Oh, I hope I have not done any harm—I meant none—I only wanted to amuse myself and laugh a little, and not have to think about other things !”

“Don't,” sobbed Galt incoherently, “I can't bear it ! It's not because of myself, it's because it's all my fault. It wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been such a brute.”

“Never mind, you didn't mean it. It wouldn't have happened, would it, but for my bad temper either. We are both sorry ! I liked you, you know. I liked to tease you and worry you, and to be chums with you. I'm sorry it is all over ! Oh, here is Bertie !”

Lattril and Maguire came in together. Peggie gave a weak little cry of joy, and tried to rise from the cushions, but could not. She could not even stretch her arms towards him, but her eyes and lips and voice gave such welcome that it seemed as if all her soul rose to meet him, while her poor broken body lay helpless.

“Bertie, have they told you ?”

Maguire stepped forward and drew Galt away. But Lattril did not notice either of them ; he knelt down beside his wife, and took her gently in his arms.

“Poor little girl ! We didn't expect this, did we ?”

“Bertie, I have to die, did they tell you that ? We are parted after all. After you have tried so hard to live, given up everything to live for me. And now I am going first, it is you who will be left. Oh, my love, my love, I don't want to leave you !”

The terrible grief in her voice struck right through the hearts of her hearers, but her husband's tone was quite bright and cheerful as he answered—

“It's all right, Peggie, I'm coming too.”

“Bertie, not on purpose, you don't mean——”

“No, dear, no, not that way ! But it seems that in spite of all our care my time is up. I felt so queer this evening—no, not because of the run upstairs ; before that—that I went to the doctor again, and he told me the truth. What we have both been dreading so long and trying to ward off is quite near now, and we don't dread it. I shan't be long behind you, perhaps not a day, perhaps we shall go together.”

“Together ! Ah ! that's good !” All the despair and horror left her face. She let her head rest quietly on her husband's shoulder, absolutely contented.

“I thought to-night that I'd got to go first, and leave you,” Lattril murmured in her ear. “This is better, isn't it ?”

“Much better.”

She was content as a tired child is content to sleep, but she spared one thought for her friends.

“Say good-night to them all for me, Bertie, and ask them to go,

please. Thanks so much for being sorry all of you, but you see—you understand now—he and I only want each other now.”

* * * * *

Next day a paragraph in the afternoon papers announced the death of Miss Lee with some comment on the accident, and a kind word or two of her beauty and talents. Langton asked Maguire if he had seen it.

Maguire said “Yes,” and showed him a later edition of the same paper, which told of the death of Peggie Lee’s husband from heart disease, from which he had long been a sufferer.

“I said there might be something in it all we didn’t understand ! To give up the excitement of work and an active life, was probably a very great sacrifice to him. We learned what she thought on the matter last night.”

Langton did not answer. Perhaps he still thought a husband should not have made such a sacrifice.

But as Lattril had said “What did it matter ; what did it matter what anyone thought of him and Peggie then ?”



Christmas Old and New.

AN ACROSTIC.

BY WALTER PARKE.



OME, Christmas, with thine ancient sports and pleasures !
 Hang misletoe and holly on our walls !
 Ring out gay chimes ; and tread we merry measures
 In rural homes and old baronial halls !
 Stir up the dozing yule-log till its embers
 Turn guests and banquet to a ruby red.

May hath no frolic joys to match December's,
 Alive with mirth, while grief and hate are dead.
 So blessings, Christmas, on thy frosty head !

Oh, quaint King Christmas ! staunchest of old Tories !
 Lately, indeed, some critics slight thy glories ;
 Dickens, they say, exhausted thee in stories.

Alas ! in these, our *fin-de-siècle* days,
 New customs fight the old in many ways—
 Depriving them of due respect and praise.

Next century's near ! Then what will Christmas be ?
 Even as now ? Or changed—like you and me ?
 Well, wait a few more years and we shall see !



Mimicry.

BY ARTHUR PLAYFAIR.



HOWEVER true it may be that "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" there are undoubtedly a large number of people whose views do not accord with the truth of this theory, and who are at all times in the highest degree sensitive about being taken off. This remark, however, I am pleased to say does not apply to actors as a body. Without mentioning names, I shall content myself by saying that not merely have several of the most renowned artists of the day desired me as a favour, at various public entertainments, to take them off in their presence, but I am unable to recall a single instance in which the slightest annoyance has ever been shown by them at the result.

In my humble opinion, the most accomplished mimics of the day in their own respective spheres are Mr. Arthur Roberts and the late Mr. Fred Leslie. As a work of art, what, for example, could surpass the impersonation by the former artist of a French comic singer, or the latter gentleman's imitation of certain musical instruments? If these two performances cannot be pronounced to be the perfection of "Mimicry," I frankly confess my inability to interpret or to offer any illustration of the true meaning of those words!

Although I am open to correction on the point, it is my firm belief that in nine cases out of ten, the gift which forms the subject of these few remarks is not an acquired but a hereditary one. At all events it unquestionably is so in my own case. My grandfather possessed the accomplishment in an eminent degree, and some of his talent descended on me through my father, who, likewise, excels as a mimic, though his abilities in this respect have never been witnessed by the public.

The first attempt made by me was during my school-days, when I succeeded in affording some little amusement to my fellow students in taking off the different masters, although that little amusement resulted, more than once, in serious trouble to myself! These, and other incidents of my younger days, must, however, be reserved for some future occasion.

Theatrical performances have invariably been the source of the most intense pleasure to me; and after having witnessed, for the first time, the performances of some leading London actor, many is the hour I used to spend in front of my large mirror for the purpose of catching his facial expressions and movements. When I have once seen an actor on the stage, I never experience any

difficulty in deciding whether my efforts to impersonate him are likely to prove successful.

The first time the sketch, "Round the Theatres" (written for me by Fred Bowyer) was submitted by me to the public, was at Herr Meyer Lutz's benefit on the 5th of April, 1891, when I imitated Messrs. Henry Kemble, Beerbohm Tree, Chas. Wyndham, William Terriss, and E. S. Willard, and so encouraging was the reception then accorded me, that I resolved to add to the above list, which now includes:—Messrs. E. J. Lonnen, Lionel Brough, Herbert Campbell, Albert Chevalier, Arthur Roberts, and others.

Imitations, in my experience, are a great strain upon the voice, so much so, indeed, that I have been obliged to make a point of never giving them more than twice in the course of the same evening. Only a few nights ago, however, I was obliged to disregard the rule by performing in four different parts of London on the same day, the result being that my voice both that night and next day forsook me.

I may mention that there is one actor of distinction who has never been imitated by me, and I pride myself upon the fact. My reason for this is not that I am not an ardent admirer of his genius, for such is very far from being the case; but simply because every one has been for many years past trying his hand at Mr. Henry Irving, and, consequently, imitations of that gentleman have long ceased to be a novelty.

When I was giving my sketch one evening at the Lyric Club recently, an amusing little incident occurred. I had finished my imitation of one actor, and announced, as usual, the name of the following one. This happened to be Mr. Charles Wyndham, and my announcement was received with an unusual amount of applause; but I naturally attributed this to his being a popular man, and actor, as well as a member of the Club. I therefore proceeded with the work before me, and resumed my place in front of the curtain, where, amongst others, I recognised Mr. Wyndham himself, who, I ascertained, had entered the auditorium at the precise moment when his name had been given out by me. I am pleased to say that the distinguished actor was in no wise annoyed by my effort to portray him. Happily I knew this would be the case, because, on a previous occasion at a large supper party given in the Yacht Room of the Criterion Theatre, he had himself requested me to imitate Charles Wyndham in the rôle of David Garrick. Being his guest on the occasion, I deemed it my duty to comply, and after my performance he was kind enough to inform me that he had found no difficulty in recognising the imitation. I need hardly add that the compliment gratified me.

Upon every occasion when I happen to be giving my imitations at any place where I have never appeared before, I feel so nervous that the introductory lines frequently desert me.

I would add, in conclusion, that I have given "Round the Theatres" at numerous London theatres, music halls, clubs and drawing-

rooms, but the audience before whom it affords me the greatest pleasure to perform is that at the Gaiety Theatre, which is invariably attentive during the performance, and the most enthusiastic on its termination, when it has been pleased therewith.

Gaiety Theatre, December, 1892.



Magdalene.

BY CHARLES WARNER.

“Who bade thee turn upon God, and say, ‘Behold, my offering is of the earth and not worthy. Thy fire comes not upon it, therefore, though I slay not my brother whom Thou acceptest, I will depart before Thou smite me!’ Why should’st thou rise up and tell God he is not content? Had He of His warrant certified so to thee? Be not nice to seek out division, but possess thy love in sufficiency What He hath set in *thine heart* to do, *that do thou!* and even though thou do it without thought of Him, it shall be well done; it is this sacrifice that He asketh of thee, and His flame is upon it for a sign. Think not of Him, but of His love and thy love, for God is no morbid exactor. He hath no hand to bow beneath, nor a foot that thou should’st kiss it.”—DANTE ROSSETTI.



HAD been reading the lines above quoted one Sunday afternoon in the dwelling formerly occupied by the great poet himself, now in the possession of my esteemed friend, Henry Osborn O’Hagan, with whom I was staying—kindest of hosts and best of friends. The day was beginning to fade, and far out at sea you could distinguish, though faintly, the glimmer of the warning lights to passing mariners. How peaceful all seemed, far from the noise and bustle, the hurry, the excitement, the never-ceasing rush of that great wave of life in London where all seem to be struggling like shipwrecked souls, the strong battling with the weak, casting them aside without thought or care in order that they may gain the coveted prize of a place of safety for themselves. The fire every now and then sent up a bright though flickering light, and I could distinctly read the lines painted in pale blue around the dark brown woodwork above the walls, “Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.” I thought of the dead poet. Maybe he had sat many a time at the same hour in the same place looking out to sea; his mind filled with that spiritual light, with which I think his works abound. I can see in the far corner of the room a small picture of Mary Magdalene. I wonder whether it was that which suggested the beautiful lines written by him for a drawing:—

"MARY MAGDALENE.

Why wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair,
 Nay be a rose-wreath, lips and cheek.
 Nay, not this house—that banquet house we seek.
 See how they kiss, and enter. Come thou there,
 This delicate day of love we two will share.
 Till at our ear love's whispering night shall speak,
 What, sweet one—would'st thou still the foolish freak?
 Nay, when I kiss thy feet, they'll leave the stair.
 Oh, loose me! See'st thou not my bridegroom's face
 That draws me to Him? For His feet my kiss,
 My hair, my tears, He craves to-day—and oh!
 What words can tell, what other day and place
 Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His!
 He needs me, calls me—Let me go!"

My mind travelled to the little churchyard where the poet reposes, waiting. I see again the beautiful windows in the quaint old church, the gift of his beloved mother.

"THE PASSOVER

Lo! The slain lamb confronts the Lamb to slay."

Under the stone cross he rests awaiting the fulfilment of all things, the coming of the son of man—peace.

With these thoughts crowding on my mind, I think I must have slept and dreamed.

I was in Italy, engaged on a new opera—the labour of five long years. I had not been unsuccessful in former efforts, for three of my operas had been accepted and played at one of our principal theatres. I had just returned from Florence, where I had been for several months completing my work. It was the night preceding the first production. I was playing some of my favourite airs to my wife (who could not, however, quite enter into my poetic or artistic feelings), when an extraordinary feeling took possession of me. I felt that I must go to the theatre at once! I knew that something had happened—something was wrong. I hurried out of the house, making some apology to my wife and bidding my children good-night. Arriving in the street, I called a conveyance, and directed the coachman to drive immediately to the Opera.

What was my dismay on reaching there to find the house closed! I soon learned the sad cause. Mdle.—, who was to have been my prima-donna on the following night had been suddenly seized with paralysis after the first act of "*Traviata*," and the audience dismissed. What was to be done in such a terrible emergency? No one had understudied the part. Yes! the manager had given the score for understudy to Mdle.—, who was to play the heroine's sister in my opera, an important part, but still a secondary one. We immediately interviewed her, and found she was perfect in the music and words; indeed, I was surprised and charmed with her clear, young, and beautiful voice. The manager and myself determined to allow her to try the music at full rehearsal on the following day, and if satisfactory she was to sing it on that eventful night. Her rehearsal was perfect—and shall I ever forget the night—

the great *success* and *failure* of my life! Our young heroine was the rage of the hour! Called and re-called, her triumph was complete, and thenceforward her future was secure. And what of myself? At this moment I can scarcely explain! I seemed plunged into the wildest depth of passion for this girl. Waking or sleeping, her form seemed ever beside me, and I could neither write nor think save of her. Night after night, for weeks and weeks, I never moved my eyes from her during the performance. I followed her wherever she went—I was her very shadow. I knew instinctively that I seemed to hold a kind of spell over her, for whenever her eyes met mine she would avert her gaze and seem to be in a kind of dream. At last the moment came when I declared my love, my undying passion for her. She seemed not at all surprised, and for the first time she looked me calmly in the face, and said, in a very low voice, “I knew that you loved me, because since the moment I first saw you an indescribable feeling entered my heart that I cannot explain. I don’t know what it is, only I can’t resist the power of your presence. It is not love, for love must be all trusting, all confiding; and that I do not feel. But I think I fear you! I only *think* but one thing I *know*—that I dare not trust myself near you, for when near you I seem helpless. These words, falling from her lips, filled me with a mad joy, for I felt that she must at last yield to my solicitation. On the night of the feast of St.— I went to her home. It was late, and I observed that there were but few lights in the windows. I enquired of the maid whether Mdle.— was at home. No, she had been out quite an hour! When would she return? I enquired. Madame did not say, and left no message! I sauntered drearily away from the house until I came to the Church of St.—, and stood for a moment watching the noble edifice. A thought rushed across my mind that *she* was there! I entered, and saw kneeling before the shrine of the Virgin the woman I so madly loved. The soft mellow light from the small lamp above the altar fell upon her beautiful form, bowed in silent prayer. I stood like one in a dream for a few moments, then silently walked towards the altar without making a sound. As I approached she arose and faced me, her eyes suffused with tears. “I knew that you were present although I did not hear or see you,” she said. “Let us go!” And she walked like one in a trance out of the sacred place. When we arrived in the street I asked why she had come to the church. “Because I wanted to pray to God, and I could not pray at home. I wanted to feel, at least, that I was near Him, and beg for forgiveness for the sin I know sooner or later I cannot resist. I must sink with the spell that’s woven around me!

“Our lives, most dear, are never near!”

Three months after that I was standing by what I knew was her death-bed in Paris. Her hand was clasped in mine, her sweet eyes looking calmly and with a divine light into mine. “I have passed through the valley of the shadow,” she murmured, “and left my

sin behind. This meeting is our last on earth. My sin is sinned, but the spell is broken. The power you possessed over me is gone. A greater power now than any mortal wields holds me in his embrace. Death is upon me, but I do not fear to die. I have prayed earnestly, fervently to be forgiven, and I know my prayer is not in vain, for in the stillness of night during my illness I have heard voices that seemed to whisper of hope, forgiveness, and peace.

‘A new perception born of grieving love’

lifts my heart up to Him who is ever ready to receive the prayers of the penitent.”

She paused, and her face seemed for a moment lighted with a spiritual light, such as I had never seen before. Her hand relaxed its hold of mine, and I placed it gently across her breast. Death had “come to fetch her soul, whose laud is sung by saints and angels before God.”

* * * * *

The distant sound of the church-bells awoke me, and a warm and beautiful glow of light from the fire fell upon the picture of Mary Magdalene.



The Old Actor.

(For Recitation.)

BY RUTLAND BARRINGTON.



THIS new year's morn. The clear and frosty air
Which causes blood to leap in veins of youth
With sense of longing to arise and do,
And chills the veins of age, is keenly felt
In this poor garret perched beneath the eaves,
The home of one whose fame has passed away

While yet he lives. (Unkindest cut of all!)
No more for him the parts he once essayed,
The Prince of Denmark, Antony, The Moor,
In each and all of which it was his wont
‘To stir the public pulse to fever heat
In days gone by, ere sickly modern taste
Had spurn'd all classic plays from pride of place!
(A mental pabulum beyond its scope.)

A figure gaunt and grim, a noble face
Which bears disdain of fortune's puny stings.
The clothes, all threadbare, scrupulously neat,
Proclaim a man who nobly stems the tide
Of poverty—resistless to a mind
Less great than his, which will not meanly sink.
With folded arms he gazes into space,
Till suddenly the crash and noisy clang
Of joy-bells from some steeple close at hand,
Proclaim the advent of the new-born year !
The face, so stern, grows soft, the eyes are dim,
With hands outstretch'd towards the distant sky,
As if in greeting to some unseen form,
His quiv'ring lips proclaim his latest thought.

'Tis new year's morn ! Accepted time of joy,
To me a thing unknown for many years !
How times are changed ! No longer may I hope
With changing taste to stand in foremost rank.
My day is past, and I would gladly seek
The sleep of silence, but for one desire
That bids me cling to life ! The fervent wish
To see my son, my Oswald, once again !
'Twas on this day, now fifteen years agone,
He sailed to seek for wealth on foreign shores ;
And, from his silence, I should hold him dead,
But for some voice which whispers to my heart
He lives, and will return to cheer my age !

Then ceasing stood once more in speechless thought.
But hark ! A footstep sounds without the door—
A gentle knock—and when, with dull surprise
At visit paid at such unseemly hour,
The aged Actor " Enter ! " hath declaimed ;
A stalwart youth of prepossessing mien
With graceful bow explains his errand thus :—
" Forgive, dear sir, the boldness I display
In venturing thus unannounced to call,
But need of your assistance my excuse ! "
" Of my assistance, say you ? "—" Yes, you see
In me an actor of the Modern School,
Who holds in reverence the art displayed
By men like you, the giants of their time,
And fain would seek instruction at their hands ;
And, as the gain from master such as you
Is measureless to student such as I,
I pray you to accept from out my wealth
Some compensation for the hours I steal ! "
This said, he tendered to the aged man
A well-filled purse, and waited his reply.

The pinch of poverty is ne'er so keen
As when the wealth of others is displayed.
But, though starvation stared him in the face
The aged Actor answered in his pride--
"Good sir, thou meanest well ! But never yet
Have I accepted pay I have not earned !
If, in due time, I compass thy desire,
Then will I freely take my honest dues ! " .
"So be it, sir !" the youth at once exclaimed,
"And as time presses, let us now commence
My course of study ! Set me then a task ! "
"Recite me something !"—said the aged man,
Prepared his best attention to bestow.
A moment's pause, and then, with voice so full,
Grand, and sonorous that it chained the ear
Of his one listener, causing such surprise
As made him fail to notice well the words.
The youth began. "For many weary years,
Stern fate decreed that we should never meet !
But, though the seas divided us, thou know'st
That in my heart the thoughts of home and thee
Kept hope awake, which else had surely died !
And now kind Heav'n hath brought me to thy side,
Speak, father, speak ! What welcome waits thy son ? "
He paused—then smiling said—"Excuse me, sir.
The *father* has to speak upon that cue."

The aged Actor spoke as in a dream—
"Norman ! My only joy, and canst thou ask
What welcome waits thee ?"—here he gave a start—
As if he had awakened, then he cried—
But how art *thou* acquainted with this speech
From out a play which I did write *myself* ? "
The youth repeated—"Heav'n its task hath done !
Speak, father, speak ! What welcome waits thy son ? "

Thrown wide his arms—while tears of joy flow fast—
"Oswald ! My boy ! My boy ! Come home at last ! "



Magic.

BY CHARLES MORRITT.



CONJURING has been in existence from time immemorial, and has never been more popular and practical than it is to-day. A well-known poet once wrote that

Sometimes the pleasure is as great
In being cheated, as to cheat ;

and when Samuel Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, wrote that clever couplet, he, in common parlance, demonstrated that he knew a thing or two. As one who has ever been interested in conjuring, who has read most books concerning it, has witnessed with the most eager interest every exhibition relating to it, from the most accomplished professors, to the itinerants at county fairs, and who has been many years before the public as an exponent of magic, I may perhaps be permitted to address my Christmas audience on points that are peculiarly adapted to the festive period. One thing is sure, that conjuring has a peculiar charm or fascination for all classes, the spectacled academician being as susceptible to the harmless deception as the boy who buys a trick at a shop for a penny and keeps the house alive as he attempts to do something that shall astonish everybody, from his grandmother to the baby in the cradle. No matter where it is introduced, in the theatre (the building as well as the popular magazine), the drawing-room, the parlour, it is equally popular, and Royalty smiles on the successful performer as well as the gaping village boy, who wonders how on earth it is done. When we reflect on the advance made in the art, even in the past half-century, we see that the progressive spirit which has been so manifest in all departments, mental and practical, has given a stimulus to magic, which makes it still better for those who seek amusement and bewilderment, beautifully combined. The old wizard, such as was drawn by ancient writers, and put in mysterious pictures by studious painters, was a very different being in his capacity to the modern magician, who finds himself quite removed from old methods of deception, which rendered his wonders far easier of accomplishment than is now the experience of the present-day professor, who rises up to mystify the sharp-eyed, quick-witted, and keenly reasoning audiences who gather at his call. If we look back into the past we see looming up the strange figure of the white-haired wrinkled-browed man who wore the most elaborate garments, and assumed a look which was to inspire universal awe. The elaborate garments had other uses as well, if the truth must be told. The ample folds, the immense spaces, the full sleeves, the spreading drapery allowed

the magnificent personage to hide away a whole wagon-load of stuff, so that he was, really and truly, an animated warehouse capable of supplying everything, from boiled eggs and rabbits to tin tacks and canaries. The conjurer of to-day must sigh over such a picture—even if he also has to smile—for if he were to dare enter a drawing-room in such guise, or walk the stage to do his tricks, the veriest lad in the audience would vote him an intolerable impostor, whose ways were as clearly seen through as the roof of the Crystal Palace. No, in these enlightened times the professor of the magic art must come before his audience in an ordinary evening dress, and give such a clean, sharp, well-finished series of tricks, that the entertainment may be described as perfectly neat, thoroughly successful, quite interesting, and varied to a degree, the impossibility of concealing things about the body as Artemus Ward did the whisky being generally acknowledged. Unless these conditions are secured the general voice will be against the performer, and the cautious lad from Eton will look upon him with a withering contempt. The apparatus must be limited even more than the dresses in a burlesque, or Dick Swiveller's credit, who owed so much to everybody he had to go a mile to get into the next street. The hand plays a more important part than ever in the art of conjuring, the fingers are friends whose value cannot be exaggerated. Years ago Professor Anderson, then known as the "Wizard of the North," made a tremendous sensation, but he would scarcely cause a ripple on the stream of life to-day. And why! If we study his methods for a few minutes we shall ascertain. He depended for his effects on too much apparatus. Looking at his stage of twenty-five years ago and finding the large wooden boxes, the thick tables, and the generally elaborate apparatus for producing or "disappearing" various articles, we see the facilities he possessed; and keeping a fairly cool head and capable fingers he could perform any number of tricks with comparative ease, as he was mechanically assisted. For instance, if he wished to "disappear" a handkerchief he would put it in what is termed a drawer-box with a false slide to simply conceal the article when he again opened it. This act required no skill. It was simply a school-boy's trick, and to-day would be laughed at in a way the worthy Anderson would not highly enjoy. Again, he would have a large washing-tub with a false bottom, concealed within which were ducks and geese, or even human beings, and satisfy his audiences, by simply tilting it sideways in a manner to expose the interior, and telling them it was perfectly empty. Immediately after he would bring out his herds of live stock, to the unlimited wonderment of the people in front. Now, to show the improvement in the art since the days of the delightful Anderson—I suppose I must not call him sleight-of-hand-erson—and not forgetting how much more critical are our patrons in these times, the conjurer must "disappear" all small articles without the aid of boxes; for example, the trick of the "handkerchief" must have no box, but the conjurer must roll up his shirt-sleeves and show his arms as bare as a billiard ball. He is compelled to deceive the

eyes of the people by sheer sleight-of-hand, and when "appearing" or "disappearing" a human being he must first show, to satisfy the minds of his audience, that there is no such person about; he must demonstrate most unmistakeably that there is no false bottom business, and that the thick-table deception is not wanted. It must be the same with every experiment he undertakes. His audience will claim to have some good proof that his mechanical aids are not his chief resource, but the rapidity of action of the hand. A clear stage is the thing, as little furniture as possible being the requisite for winning the first faith of the audiences, who, as soon as they feel they have the right man before them, are much easier to handle.

Among my readers may be many who have tried their hands at the magic art, and, notwithstanding their experience, still have a liking for it, and especially at this time of the year are inclined to perform all the deceptions that come with Christmas entertainments. Therefore, as the Americans say, I will come to a few points on the subject, and a hint or two such as I may give will probably assist some quick gentleman to amuse his friends, and make them declare him to be quite a domestic magician—a sort of fire-side Faust.

Therefore, in pursuing my subject I will tell you what to do, and what to avoid. You must be original in some, if not all your tricks. Think them out yourself; no matter how poor they be, they are yours, and that is something, and a small idea at first may develop into a finished trick that may be vastly entertaining to a whole circle of friends! Don't give up an idea because it does not prove successful in the first few attempts. If the idea be at all a good one, keep it! It will ripen and be of good flavour yet. Stick to the idea like a leech, peg away at intervals day by day and you will find in nine cases out of ten that you will make something of it!

In card tricks practice two things, (1.) *Palming cards*; and what is known to conjurers as (2.) *Passing cards*. The first is done by constant practice of laying, say six cards on the open hand, and half closing the same, keeping the thumb away from the fingers. To do the pass with the cards the operator should buy Hoffman's book of "*Modern Magic*," which contains diagrams fully explaining every movement. The whole difficulty in doing card tricks is overcome as above-mentioned.

The practice of conjuring should in all cases be done before a mirror so that the performer can see exactly the deception and the attitude in which the hands should be held. By constant practice the hands fall to their natural position for concealing anything the performer may desire to hide. Always remember that *palming* is the main point in *sleight-of-hand*. At one time devote yourself to *palming* billiard balls with right and left hand, the next day try cards, the next coins, the next handkerchiefs, and continue alternately until you can palm any of the above-mentioned articles with absolute ease. At first the difficulties will be great; but the persevering amateur will make daily progress, and every little success will be stimulating. He will find by constant practice that he

can hold articles in his palm just as easily as between his finger and thumb. The reader may smile at this and naturally ask how it can be accomplished. He may rest assured that as he advances in palming, and difficulties disappear, fresh tricks will come to his mind; he will find his own twist of the fingers or peculiar method of concealing any article will grow upon him, and please him with its development. In fact, this is the only royal road to becoming a conjurer. Above all never try to imitate another in sleight-of-hand, many a conjurer has failed to come to the front for the simple reason that he has aimed at doing just what other famous conjurers have done. Those who imitate will lack originality of course; and this rare quality is as much appreciated in magic as in any other line of art. Let the student keep to his own ideas and not fight against himself!

Turning to my own experience of the magic world, I may say I have been before all kinds of audiences, from the Prince of Wales downwards. I find, generally speaking, that high-class audiences like pure sleight-of-hand, and what I term a deep mystery. They especially prefer something spiritualistic, and I might tell you as a profound secret that I am often asked when giving private performances if I tell fortunes. When I give my reply in the negative the disappointment is great, and I have serious thoughts of adding this elegant accomplishment of revealing the future to my programme, so that no fair lady shall go away disappointed. Coming to lower-class audiences I find that a rough, showy, comical trick affords the utmost satisfaction, such as producing ducks and rabbits and garments, or such a stale old trick as taking a barber's pole from a gentleman's mouth. In fact such a trick will please lower audiences better than the most artistic trick.

To speak of the future of magic, I have heard professors in England and America say that we have reached the limit, nothing new can be introduced. My opinion is just the contrary, and I speak with full confidence that there are many things in the mystic art yet to come to light. There are wonders to come more astonishing than anything we have yet seen, in fact there are very few really wonderful mysteries come to light as yet, and the future will prove that artistic magic is at the present time in its infancy.



Nurse Miriam's Call.

A STORY.

BY ADELAIDE C. G. SIM.

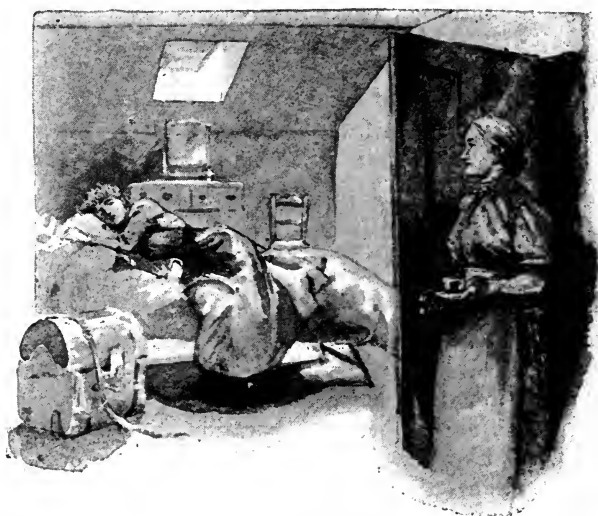


THE Sister in charge of the large hospital just outside one of the grimest, noisest, busiest and most crowded of our manufacturing towns was standing in the doorway of her own special quarters, at one end of the long plain building, looking after the doctor who had just left her at the close of a lengthy conference on hospital matters. It was a very raw November day, a damp fog was settling down over the flat waste of land that lay between the hospital and the great town about two miles distant; it hung in glistening drops on the black iron railings round the Sister's little plot of garden, and weighed down the slender branches of the few stunted shrubs that managed to hold their own in the poor soil and smoke-laden atmosphere. A dreary prospect, but yet, as the doctor disappeared through the big gates, although the Sister gave an involuntary shiver which shook her ample form and made the white wings of her head-dress tremble, she turned back to her little sitting-room with a bright smile of contentment and triumph. A good woman was the Sister Superintendent, and, what is perhaps rarer, a clever one also. She had her own ideas as to the administration and government of the large establishment over which she presided, and on occasion would defend those views even against the doctor with much energy. This afternoon, however, the two authorities had agreed with remarkable unanimity on one matter very near to the Sister's heart, the promotion of Nurse Miriam, and as the Sister sat down at her writing table and turned to the consideration of the weekly bills, she smiled again at the thought of having so easily carried a point for which she had been prepared to fight her hardest, for after two years' residence in the hospital the appointment to be bestowed on the nurse was an almost unprecedented favour.

It was only two years since a poor wasted woman had been found lying sick of typhoid fever in a miserable lodging in the town and brought to the hospital by her landlady, who could give no information respecting her beyond the fact that she had paid a week's rent in advance, had asked for a cup of tea, and, poor soul, had fallen asleep on the bed while it was preparing, to awake delirious and in a high fever. She lay for weeks between life and death in the hospital ward, and though at times she talked volubly, the nurses and sisters could make nothing of her ravings, and only agreed that she spoke like an educated woman, and that the voice

that came from her poor parched lips was singularly sweet and low. She was so ill and for so long as to create a special interest in her case among the staff, and when at last she was pronounced out of danger, there was a general feeling of relief that the natural curiosity she had aroused would at last be satisfied, and that she would soon be able to give an account of herself.

But the patient seemed in no hurry to do this ; she lay perfectly quiet, watching all that went on around her with great hazel-brown eyes, which, now that the fever had left them, showed languidly beautiful under her finely pencilled brows. She accepted all that was done for her with the gracious courtesy of a queen, and asked no questions as to how she came there or who those around her were,



"She had fallen asleep on the bed, to awake delirious and in a high fever" (p. 27).

and after a few unavailing attempts to rouse her to talk about herself, the nurses left her to be interviewed by the Sister Superintendent. This dignitary finding her one morning sufficiently strong to bear the effort of conversation, sat down by her bed and congratulated her on her improved appearance. "I daresay, my dear child," she went on, "you would like to let your friends know where you are. I'm afraid they must have been very anxious about you, but as we could find nothing to give us a clue to your name and address, we could not communicate with them. Now if you will tell me I'll write at once to them, and they can come and see you." The sick woman flushed a little during the Sister's speech, and her thin fingers fidgetted the wedding-ring they had noticed on her left hand, but when she answered it was in a quiet level voice, "I thank you very much, Sister, but there is no one to write to. I am quite alone in the world since I—lost my husband." She caught her breath

a trifle before the last words, and the Sister looked a little keenly at her, but it did not seem to embarrass her in the least, and she went on after a moment's pause, "I'm afraid I have been ill here a long time, and I am so grateful to you all for your goodness and care of me. The last thing I remember was being so tired and so miserable, and hoping that I might go to sleep and not wake again, and now I am so comfortable and this is so resting and so peaceful, I'm glad and thankful to be alive still. You won't send me away just yet, will you?" "Send you away! why my dear you won't be fit to be moved for another three weeks, and then you'll have to be looked after very carefully. What is your name?"

"Miriam."

"And your surname?"

The patient did not reply for a moment, and then looking at her



"She lay for weeks between life and death in the hospital ward" (p. 27).

questioner almost defiantly said, "Barton, Miriam Barton"—but next minute, with a smile which would have disarmed a much more touchy person than the good Sister, she added, "Please don't ask me any more now, I'm so happy to be here." And somehow all attempts at solving the mystery of Miriam's past life ended in a like unsatisfactory manner. She rapidly became convalescent, and as soon as she was allowed up began to make herself useful to the nurses, and to enliven and cheer the other patients. She seemed to possess an unending store of anecdotes and stories, and as she grew stronger might be heard singing to herself in a sweet mellow voice like a thrush in springtime; but, although many of her stories were personal experiences, no one gained any knowledge of her antecedents beyond the fact that she had led a rather wandering life, and had been pretty well all over England. The chaplain made an attempt to gain her confidence, but at the conclusion of a long conversation could only report that her views were those of an excellent

Churchwoman, and that he quite believed her when she assured him earnestly that she had no relations or friends to whom she was accountable, and both he and the Sister Superintendent were only too glad to support the petition she made to the Hospital Committee to be allowed to stay on and qualify as a nurse when she had quite recovered her strength, and, be it added, her beauty. For, as her health returned it dawned on everyone from the visiting physician to the boy who cleaned the boots that Nurse Miriam was what the former denominated "a very fine woman," and the latter "a stunner!" She was rather above the middle height, with a figure that asserted its claim to admiration even in the straight-cut hospital uniform, and she moved as a poor German patient described it, "Wie eine Göttin." Her prettily shaped head was a mass of golden brown curls that refused to be entirely hidden away under her white cap, and her almost classic features were redeemed from severity by the sweetness of her laughter-loving mouth. She would have been almost worth keeping as an ornament, but to the delight of the doctors and sisters she showed a distinct genius for nursing, unbounded energy, unflagging patience, and with the most sympathetic nature had nerves of steel. She had become a treasure in the hospital, and the doctor's promise to appoint her head of the accident ward was a source of intense gratification to the Superintendent.

The dull miserable afternoon wore on, and presently a knock at the door interrupted the Sister's accounts, and at her "Come in," Nurse Miriam entered dressed for walking. "Do you want anything in the town, Sister; I'm going in to do some shopping—I want the exercise—I shall be back by tea-time?"

Of course there were a few trifles to be purchased, and messages to be left, and then after a recommendation not to be out in the fog too late, and to be sure to take the 'bus home, Miriam started on her walk. It was not a cheerful road to the town, leading as it did past brick fields and desert places waiting the advent of the jerry-builder, nor did it look even its evil best on this yellow, misty winter's day. Nurse Miriam shivered a little as she plunged into the fog, and drew her long grey cloak more closely round her, but starting at a good swinging pace she soon began to feel exhilarated by her own motion which sent the blood coursing through her veins, and brought a vivid colour into her cheeks. The road was not much frequented, only workmen living in the little settlement that had grown up round the hospital used it morning and evening, going to and fro to their work in the town, or a cart would lumber past at long intervals, and this afternoon the fog had settled down so completely that one could not see a yard ahead. Nurse Miriam walked along revolving in her own mind certain improvements in a system of bandaging now being experimentally tried in the accident ward, when suddenly the sound of voices young and boyish pierced through the dark air and fell on her ears.

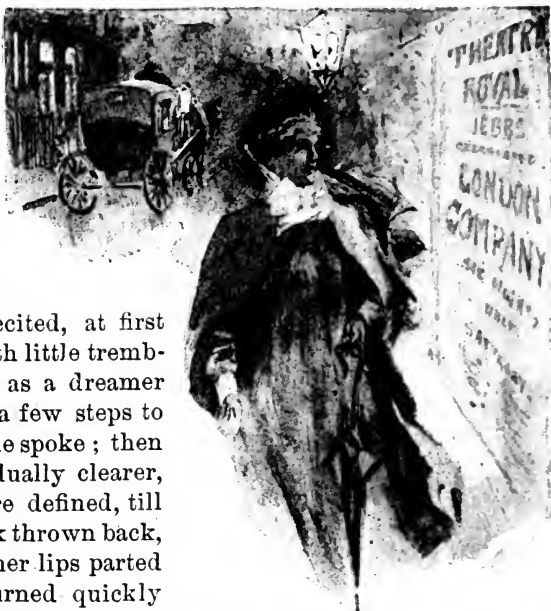
"I'm awfully sorry for the guv'nor; it will mean a dead loss to him having to change the bill to-morrow, but I don't see what else

he can do. There's no one in the company to play Rosalind. Can you see Miss Karslake in the part? 'Alas the day! What shall I do with my doublet and hose?' in that shrill scolding voice of hers?"

"Her voice would suit the part about as well as the doublet and hose would suit her figure," was the reply, and the speakers joined in a hearty peal of laughter as they walked past without noticing the grey-clad woman who stood motionless near them, for at their words. Miriam had stopped dead. A miracle was happening. For her the fog had rolled away, the long straight road had disappeared, the sky was bright above, the tender green of the forest of Arden was over her head, the tall ferns reached to her knees, the spring flowers bloomed at her feet,

and rushing to her lips in broken tremulous accents came the sweet womanly words that Shakespeare has put into the mouth of his most winsome, best-loved heroine. Speech after speech she recited, at first under her breath with little trembling gestures, such as a dreamer might use, moving a few steps to the right or left as she spoke; then her voice grew gradually clearer, her movements more defined, till at last, her long cloak thrown back, her eyes all alight, her lips parted in a laugh, she turned quickly with arms extended and met—not the gnarled oak trunk where Orlando hung his verses, but the grim brick wall of a villa garden!

She leant up against it for a moment, pale and trembling, half giddy with the sudden consciousness of her return to real life, then she heaved a long sigh as if bringing her very soul from another world, and started again on her way with feverish haste, her lips close pressed together, her brow knit. Once in the town, she became her practical, energetic self—ordering, selecting, bargaining, executing all her many commissions, until at last everything being satisfactorily completed, she came out of a shop in the principal street and paused for a moment irresolutely. Facing her was a dead wall on which the light of a neighbouring gas lamp fell, covered with advertisements. The merits of the latest improved bicycle were there set forth, the newest baby's feeding bottle, the most stylish three-



"Mr. Jebb's celebrated company was engaged at the Theatre Royal for six nights only." (p. 32).

shilling hat, the forthcoming chapel sale of work was there announced, and in the very centre was a huge orange-coloured poster informing the public that Mr. Jebb's celebrated London Company was engaged at the Theatre Royal for six nights only.

Nurse Miriam gave one long searching glance at this, and then set off as fast as she could down the street in the opposite direction to her way home. It was a dirty old part of the town where she found herself after a few minutes' rapid walking, but she seemed to know her way, and taking a turn to the right down a very pokey, dismal alley she stopped before a small doorway with a lighted gas lamp above it. The door was only half closed, and yielded to her push, and as she entered the narrow badly-lit passage a man's voice came out of the semi-darkness demanding what she wanted.

"I want to see Mr. Jebb on business, and at once."

Her imperative manner seemed to impress the guardian of the place, for without further ado he called out, "Well, you'll find 'im on the stage, straight on and mind the step; wait a bit though 'e's a-coming out," and as he spoke an elderly man stout and clean shaved with a rather crumpled appearance, and a hat on the back of his head, came quickly down the passage to where the nurse stood.

"Here, Moxon, what does this lady want? Oh! a nurse, eh! My dear madam, if you've come to ask for a benefit for the hospital or anything of that kind, I'm exceeding sorry, but——"

"But I haven't come to ask for anything, Mr. Jebb," said Miriam, her voice trembling, "I've come to know whether you'd like me to play Rosalind for you to-morrow; and, oh! my dear old friend, surely you haven't quite forgotten me?"

She held out her hands as she spoke to the astonished manager, and the eyes she raised to his were full of tears. He caught her wrists and drew her under the light. "Great Scott!" he exclaimed, "it's Miriam Durand. Why, my dear child, you've come to save me; know you, indeed, as if I shouldn't know you anywhere. Where on earth have you come from, and what are you doing in this get up? Here you there, what's-your-name, give me back those notices for the press, we'll play "As You Like It" to-morrow, and if we don't knock 'em my name's not Walter Jebb. I'll have a poster out in the morning that will make them sit up, I know. There, there, my dear, why what's the matter?" for Miriam had hidden her face on her old friend's shoulder, and was sobbing as if her heart would break.



"Miriam had hidden her face on her old friend's shoulder, and was sobbing as if her heart would break."

"Now don't cry, for Heaven's sake don't cry; here come round with me to the missus, and have a bit of something to eat and a cup of tea, and you'll be all right. We've no show to-night, and our diggings are close by, so you'll spend the evening with us. Why, my dear, you've come like an angel at the very nick of time; there's nothing to cry about." And, talking all the time, the good-natured old fellow led his companion through one or two little winding streets to his lodgings.

Mrs. Jebb's astonishment was as great as her husband's, and even more voluble, and having first enveloped Miriam in a vast embrace and then wept freely over her, she was at last persuaded by the manager to sit down to her meat tea and explanations.

"To begin at the beginning," asked she, "where's your husband, and what have you been doing these last three years, and why are you dressed as a nurse?" "And can you rehearse at ten to-morrow?" interrupted her husband.

"I'll rehearse whenever you please, Mr. Jebb, and I only hope I've not forgotten everything I ever knew, but I haven't played since I left you, and I didn't know I should ever play again. I thought that part of my life was all done with and put away, but to-day I heard someone say a line of Rosalind's, and I felt as if I were raised from the dead, I couldn't stay away another moment, and when I found it was your company here I came straight to the theatre, and please take me and let me go back to the dear old times," and as she finished Miriam left her seat and came up to Mrs. Jebb and put both arms round her neck.

"Take you back, my dear, why of course he will, and glad enough to have you," said the old lady, "we've never got used to being without you; but Miriam, my dear, when you left us you were to be married. Didn't that fellow keep his word?"

Miriam pulled off her left glove and showed her ring. "He was a scoundrel, Mrs. Jebb, but not so bad as that; but when after a year's misery he deserted me, I was ashamed to let you or any of my old friends know. I somehow found my way here, fell ill, and was taken to the hospital——"

"Where they made a nurse of you?"

"And where I ought to be at this very moment!" cried Miriam; to think I could have forgotten my work, what will the Sister say?" and she hurried off regardless of her friend's remonstrances. What the Sister *did* say when she heard Miriam's story proved her, as I have said, a clever as well as a good woman, "My dear, good actresses are much rarer than good nurses; God bless you, and when you come to the town next time give us a benefit for the hospital," which Nurse Miriam never fails to do.



Dancing.

BY SYLVIA GREY.



T seemed as easy as A B C to write about dancing, but now that it comes to setting down what I thought I had to say, it appears as perplexing—though not so amusing—as a missing word competition. First of all, I am in doubt where to begin; secondly, I am at a loss how to go on; and lastly, I have not an idea how, or where, to end.

Perhaps to begin quite at the beginning will be best. So here, to start with, is a good sound maxim, "In dancing, don't try to run before you can walk." It might be supposed that this warning was quite unnecessary, but the very reverse is the case. When once a strong tide of popular favour flows towards some particular branch of art, the rush from all sides to clamber to the top of the tree is quite bewildering. It is like the scramble of gold-diggers when a new field is discovered. Never mind whether you are old, or lame, or blind, you buy a pick and a spade (or in other words an accordion-pleated skirt and a pair of dancing shoes) and off you go, quite certain of success. During these last three years, I am sure a description of the people who have wished to come to me as pupils, and be turned out finished scholars in a dozen lessons, would have kept the comic papers busy for ever so long. But of course that isn't the way to dance!

First, you should have dancing *in you*, just as mimicry was in poor Fred Leslie, and writing was in Charles Dickens, and acting is in Miss Ellen Terry, and joking is in Arthur Roberts. It must be in your nature to dance, or you will never learn to be anything but coldly correct and mechanical. And then, you ought to begin to study the art when you are young and supple, and not so bent upon having your own way, or inclined to fly in the face of your teachers—sometimes—as you will be later on. For instance, if I could be ten years old again to-morrow—and how nice that would be for some things!—I could not wish for anything better than learning in the same schools that I actually did begin to attend just—well, when I had hardly turned ten.

Espinoza, Katti Lanner, John D'Auban. They were my teachers; and to them I owe nearly everything of my training. They are the master teachers in my opinion, though, the latter would probably tell you that he bowed down to Espinoza, whom Mr. Irving has enlisted into that wonderful staff of his at the Lyceum—and very wisely, too, for a marvellous teacher he is. Well, under Mr. D'Auban I gradually got into a pretty intimate acquaintance with, I

should think, every kind of dance under the sun, excepting, perhaps, the war-dance of the Red Indians, and the Celestial antics of the heathen Chinese. This is really the only system of education that is of much good. Learn every style, pass through every school from the classical to the fantastical, and then nothing can present any serious obstacle when the real work of dancing begins. That, I think, most of my pupils—even the quickest and most promising—have imagined to be the actual learning, but there again is a mistaken idea.

The work, the real work, of dancing only begins after you have acquired all that your teachers can show you, and when you have to rely upon your own ideas. For then you must decide what style to adopt, what your audience will be most likely to approve, and how far you can give the reins to your invention—if you have any. And you will come very badly off, if you haven't; for in dancing, as in most other things, it is ideas that carry the day. You may be a perfect dancer in all that appertains to nimbleness and skill, and strength, and energy, and grace, and yet be unable to rouse your audience. There is the difference between academic dancing and interesting dancing, exactly the same difference as in acting, painting, writing. On the one side you have the accomplished people labelled by the experts as "the masters," and on the other you have the Robertses, the Bramleys, the Jeromes, who just do what it is in them to do, and give vent to their own ideas, and in a day they have left all "the masters" behind.

The search after ideas is, I know, the great trouble with me. Sometimes the idea is terribly difficult to realise, as in the case of a splendid one I am quietly trying now of ——. But perhaps I had better not say, for others are on the hunt, too, and maybe to let the cat out of the bag would be to hand it over to somebody else—and this kitten especially is such a *very* pretty one! Sometimes, on the contrary, the idea is too simple, and in its simplicity would not appeal to the public, who are not only very generous in encouraging clever work but also very careful in seeing that they get it, and so that has to be abandoned, and there are more sleepless hours of trying to think of something that *will* do. Now that competitions and prizes are so popular, I am not sure whether it would not be a good idea to start one for the supply of designs for original and striking dances. It would be worth while offering a handsome prize in order to rid myself of the most worrying part of my work.

There is room for another grumble though—this time over never getting any chance of being part and parcel of the play. The dancer just comes on, and dances, and goes off again. Now, I should like to see her right in the story, a character in the piece. Dancing is so beautiful, and the people love it so much, that surely it deserves to have more meaning attached to it than is permitted nowadays. Perhaps, however, it is only my own ambition that is speaking, for I often long to get away from the dance, and be a comedy actress again.

Whenever anyone breathes a wish like that, some kind person with a horribly accurate memory is sure to mention that Liston believed he could play tragedy; but I like to think of Miss Kate Vaughan and the brave step she took. There was a dancer, indeed! What exquisite grace, what wonderful charm! I remember someone saying once that the secret of her power was in her leaving her audience unsatisfied. They always went away wanting to have more of those beautiful glidings and willowy bendings. Perhaps it was so. Certainly I never saw anyone whose dancing was so perfect. Yet she resigned it all for the sake of acting, and her example and her success ought to put courage into more timid spirits. But there! I am not talking about dancing at all, but about Miss Vaughan (of whom I should like to write pages) and the emptiness of dancing compared with acting.

Let me see, I have said that you ought to begin young, and learn from John D'Auban, and have plenty of invention—and I suppose I have bound myself also to the opinion that when you have become quite proficient, you should begin to think of throwing up dancing, and taking to something different! What else is there to tell? Oh, that a dancer who is a dancer by nature—and that's the only sort there should be—will hardly ever do a dance twice alike. That is to say, the dance will come from the heart, not the head, and will vary with the feelings. Spontaneity is the very life of it all. Without that, though there can be moving to music, and moving with grace and dexterity and precision, there can be no real dancing. And speaking for myself, if I were to think of my movements and steps, I should quickly become confused. The dance must be within me, if I may describe it so. It must move my hands and feet, and sway my body, without any conscious effort of will on my part. This, too, as I understand, is the experience of every dancer whose work is done under the exciting conditions of stage-work.

It was my delight in the dance for its own sake that led my friends to encourage me, and after I had indulged in wild dreams of winning fame as a singer, consoled me with the hope that, if I could not be a Patti, I might possibly strike out a line for myself in this other—very much other—direction. The spontaneous method has its drawbacks, however. How? you ask. Well, the answer is similar to that which Punch gave to the question, "Is life worth living?" For in dancing from the heart, if that sensitive organ is at all heavy with trouble of its own, or through sympathy with the woes of any of its neighbours the feet will be heavy also, and the dance will be flop, flop, flop, and nothing more.

In a plight like this, it is a great relief to be dancing in skirts, for there is a lot of acting to be done with them, and if the feet are not so deft as usual, the skirt may hide their slips and errors. Personally I should like to see the full skirt done away with. There is more grace of movement possible, I think, with Psyche draperies; there certainly can be no attitudes more exquisitely beautiful than those in the Greek Sculptures. In fact, anyone who is going to study

dancing can do plenty of good work by just going to South Kensington or the British Museum, and getting by heart the beautiful poses to be seen in the sculpture galleries there.

Not that this will teach how it is done, any more than the conjuror with his explanation of his trick will enable anyone else to do it. But it will accustom the mind to the lines of beauty, to the curves that should be reproduced in the dance, and insensibly the body will attempt to adapt itself to them, if the dancer is of the proper kind—the kind of which nature and not the necessity of earning a living makes dancers. But there is no getting to the end of the art, no perfect mastery of it. The more you learn, the more you see ahead of you to learn, and perhaps that is how it is that so few of us ever try to desert the old love for less exhausting and more enduring arts.

Finally, I would like to add that when I watched Miss Ellen Farren dance, it proved to me that it is as graceful to dance in tights as in skirts.



The Great Pantomime.



ES, here's the Christmas Pantomime,
And here are Tom and Mary.
He'll be a Clown (in ten years time)
And she will be a Fairy !
We don't believe a word they say,
These youthful myth creators—
We've been behind the scenes, and they
Have only been spectators.

For we have pierced the comic veil,
And seen the naked Isis ;
And where they smile, we weep and wail—
A tear still laughter's price is.
Though children laugh, nor would be loth
To put the motley dress on,
To children of a larger growth
Each scene's a solemn lesson.

The World's a Stage, as Shakespeare own'd,
Stage-managed, say, by Brahma ;
And Life a Comedy that's toned
By hints of Melodrama ;

In fact, it is a Pantomime,
With scenery colossal,
Where little reason, faulty rhyme,
And third-rate actors jostle.

Our Harlequin is mystic Fate ;
Our Columbine is Fortune,
We find her, lose her, lie in wait,
We chase, and we importune ;
We place her in, we'll say, a shop,
And after many dodgings,
We find she has not come to stop,
So take to letting lodgings.

Our Pantaloons are hypocrites.
When told of wrongs, they wonder
Whose head so black a fool's cap fits,
And pocket half the plunder.
The wise man walks in threadbare gown,
His case is most distressful ;
His voice the louder voices drown,
While Clowns are most successful.

Here innocence is learning still
How bitter-sweet life's cup is ;
Our boys ground in the social mill,
Oft turn not men, but puppies.
Here some slip on the buttered slide,
Whose lives are made too easy ;
For traps are laid on every side,
And calumny is breezy.

So, wise or simple, great or small—
Or run, or gently amble—
You will discover after all,
That life is but a scramble ;
And you will wait, and dream, and long
To end your brief probation,
And welcome with a joyous song
The final transformation.

But I have wandered far away
From where erstwhile I started ;
And I am sitting out the play,
With courage grown half-hearted.
For here's the Christmas Pantomime,
And here are Tom and Mary.
He'll be a Clown (in ten years time)
And she will be a Fairy !

FRANK A. CLEMENT.



Two Fetches.

BY JESSIE BOND.



F gigantic gooseberries and sea-serpents are the produce of autumn, Christmastide has the first claim to a well-matured crop of ghosts. The moment is therefore opportune for me to relate my solitary experience in the matter of apparitions or hallucinations, or whatever may be the more correct description of what I both saw and felt.

Ghosts, I understand, are usually the spirits of the departed presented to the sight of the living. My ghost, however, had nothing whatever to do with anyone's departure, it is alive now and in the enjoyment of excellent health ; but all the same it was a ghost. Then again ghosts have no business to walk abroad before midnight, and when they do take a walk should confine themselves to dusky corners and dusty corridors ; they certainly have no right to obtrude themselves in a theatre and more especially upon the stage when a comic opera is in course of performance, and in the full glare of electric light. That is, however, just what my ghost did. It came to the Savoy one night during the run of "Ruddigore," attracted perhaps by a desire to show Mr. Gilbert's Ruddigore ghosts what very inferior beings they were in comparison with the genuine article. This is not all ; it—but perhaps I had better tell the story just as it happened, and then leave others to make head or tail of it, and explain it if they can. As for myself, I have never been able to do either one or the other, and if I have not yet breathed a word to anyone, the reason of my silence may possibly be found in the fact that I had no desire to provoke good-naturedly contemptuous laughter from the company. I am no longer a Savoyard, and therefore have now no reason for reticence.

My dressing-room at the Savoy—small but cosy—was on a level with, in fact on the stage, and next to the green-room. Those who remember "Ruddigore" may also remember that, with the exception of the mad scene in the first act, nearly all my business was with Mr. Rutland Barrington, and that it was comic business.

I had not been well for some time, and it was very doubtful from day to day whether I should be able to continue to play. Consequently it was Mr. Barrington's habit on entering the theatre, and before going to his own room, to knock at my door and kindly enquire how I felt. I used to listen for his cheery voice each night, and was very rarely disappointed.

On the particular evening selected by my ghost for its visit there was no enquiry, and I began to feel uncomfortable, fearing Mr. Bar-

ington might be away and that I should have to play with the understudy—an equally difficult matter for the understudy and myself in my then state of nervous exhaustion.

I had scarcely finished dressing when I heard my cue. Hurrying on to the stage, I got through my part in the first act, hardly knowing what I was doing, but much reassured by seeing my fears were groundless as to Mr. Barrington's possible absence.

In the interval between the acts I found myself getting very sleepy and weary, and must, after changing my costume, have dozed off. I was awakened by a knock at the door, that tap for which I had been listening before the performance commenced. I turned the handle and there stood before me, dressed for the part and ready to go on, not Mr. Barrington, nor even his understudy, but a gentleman who I knew was, or should have been, playing the same part in one of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's companies in the provinces. I was fairly astonished, so much so that "Where's Barrington?" was the only greeting I gave. "Never mind about Barrington, but come at once, or there'll be a stage-wait," he replied. Taking his arm as we moved along to where we made our entrance, I whispered, "But when did you come, and why are you playing in the second act?" Ere he had time to answer we were before the public, and then, as usual with me, everything else but my part went out of my head, and I saw nobody but my stage partner, and heard nothing but my cues. Whether I played better or worse than usual I don't know, but I do know that I couldn't take my eyes off X——, who was in Mr. Barrington's shoes for the nonce.

When the curtain fell on the *finale* my strength fell with it, and, on reaching my room, I suppose I must have fainted, for the next thing I remember was a confused buzz of voices, a sensation of extreme cold, and a strong smell of sal-volatile. There were half-a-dozen faces round me, the owner of each doing her best to restore me to consciousness by different processes, in all of which the application of cold water appeared to play the principal part.

My first words were to ask how it was X—— was on in the second act instead of Barrington, but no one would give me a straightforward answer. I was feeling too utterly prostrate to pursue the matter at that time, and adopted the wiser course of deferring enquiry until I should be at the theatre the following evening. I had, however, miscalculated my strength, for I was unable to resume my work for three or four days.

In the interim something occurred which quite decided me to hold my tongue altogether and to ask no further question of anyone, not even of my sister who, a member of the Savoy Company, had been with me from the moment I was taken ill at the theatre until her duties necessitated her leaving me—comfortably tucked up in bed—on the following evening.

At home I had asked her one question and only one, and it was the question to which I could obtain no answer from anyone at the theatre, "Why did X—— take Barrington's part in the second act?"

to which, after much pressing and with evident reluctance, she replied "Barrington did play in the second act as well as in the first. X—— is playing, as surely you know, at Newcastle."

I gave it up, but not in the least because I was convinced that I was wrong. I inferred there was some reason why the truth was kept from me, just as people will sometimes keep back truth from invalids, with a mistaken notion that they are doing a very clever thing. I professed to be satisfied, but, directly my sister had left the house, I rang for the maid and asking for writing materials commenced a letter to X——, begging him to explain to me the circumstances under which he had come up to London the previous evening only just in time to play in the second act of "Ruddigore." I had fastened the envelope when I heard the postman thrusting a letter into the box, and a minute later my servant brought me a missive which bore the Newcastle post-mark, and of which the address was in the handwriting of my old friend X——

Here it is—

Newcastle, Friday, 1 a.m.

"Dear Jessie,—My wife is in a great state of mind about you, but her state of mind is nothing to mine! If I write incoherently you must forgive me. Do send us a wire directly you receive this, and say you are well. To-night I was playing here in "Ruddigore," with little Bellingham as Mad Margaret. After the first act I must have stayed talking with some of the boys longer than I thought, and so had to hurry down for our entrance. I had only just sufficient time to get to the back of the stage, when to my utter astonishment, who should I see waiting to go on with me but your own little self instead of Bellingham! For the moment I was quite taken aback, but before I had time to say a word you—yes, *you*—put your arm through mine, I shouldered my gamp, and the duet commenced. You weren't a bit different to what you always are. You weren't pale (how could you be through the fake?) and you weren't—well, you weren't a ghost! The only thing which struck me as queer was you wouldn't indulge in the smallest aside, or give me the slightest clue to the cause of your unexpected presence on the boards of the Theatre Royal, Newcastle, in fact you adhered most conscientiously to your words and your business. During the waits I could never find you nor could I see Bellingham anywhere, and when the curtain fell you miraculously disappeared. I ran at once to Bellingham's room and hammered at the door like a lunatic, with the result that I was severely taken to task by that young person for creating a disturbance. I asked her where you were and why *she* hadn't played through the opera? You know she is not fond of a joke, but to-night she seemed less inclined for one than ever. Looking me straight in the face, she said slowly—

"'I think Mr. X—— you had better go home, and to bed, and ask your wife to send for some soda-water.' With that she slammed the door in my face.

"I have come home, I have not gone to bed, and I have *not* asked for soda-water, but I have written all this to you to ask you to tell us what it all means.

"My wife's love. I hope I am not going dotty.—Yours,

"X——"

What it all means! That is the very thing I myself want to know, but I fear my curiosity is not likely to be gratified.

I thought it well not to send my letter to X——, or to reply to his even by telegram, and I dare say by this time—it occurred some few years ago—he has persuaded himself that Miss Bellingham's advice was sound, and that he did require soda-water.

Mrs. X—— is also probably of the same way of thinking, if she ever thinks of it at all.

I, however, know better.



Sicilian Puppet Shows.

BY EVELYN BALLANTYNE.



CONFESS to having, in common with poets, statesmen, and other great men, a weakness for Punch-and-Judy shows, and have often been guilty of "standing out" a whole performance, fifteen minutes from prologue to final curtain. There is a subtle fascination about this historic old drama, with its gaudy puppets, its thrilling episodes of corporal punishment, and the stern Nemesis embodied in its final scene at the scaffold. It is true that a proper regard for my dignity generally induces me to take my stand on the outskirts of the eager crowd of ragged spectators, in the attitude of one who so far unbends as to arrest his progress in order to observe, from the lofty standpoint of the man of the world and student of human nature, the popular recreations of the masses. Then just before the curtain is "rung down," knowing well that this heralds the arrival on the scene of a morose and husky-voiced myrmidon shaking a plate viciously in the faces of the rapidly thinning audience, I discreetly proceed on my way, affecting a superior and tolerant sort of smile intended to suggest the unbending of a great mind.

We do not need Macaulay's omniscient schoolboy to tell us that Punch-and-Judy shows had their origin in the miracle plays of the middle ages. Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot, the traditional stage villains, and, consequently, the popular favourites of audiences a thousand years ago, are no doubt the progenitors of Punch and Judy, and Tobit's dog of the Apocrypha the illustrious prototype of our old favourite Toby.

From the mediæval miracle plays it is a natural transition to the puppet-shows of southern Italy and Sicily. These essentially popular entertainments—full of robust humour, and thoroughly characteristic of the south-Italian temperament—are the favourite recreation of the masses in Naples and Sicily. They must not be confounded with the tame and colourless performances with which, under the name of Marionettes, we are only too familiar at children's Christmas parties. This "refined and instructive drawing-room entertainment, lasting an hour-and-a-quarter, including the services of a skilful manipulator for the inclusive charge of three guineas," to quote the price lists of the firms who cater for Christmas parties, must not be compared with the genuine Italian puppet-show; neither has it anything in common with the marionette performances, which, under the name of *Théâtre Guignol*, are supposed to amuse Parisian children and their *bonnes* in the Champs Elysées and the Tuileries

Gardens. No, the puppet-show must be seen *in situ*. It does not flourish beyond its native heath.

All Italians are born actors. For genuine fun and racy, if boisterous, humour, no actor can surpass the Neapolitan; the very beggar-boy is a consummate comedian. His gestures are as prolific and dramatic as they are easy and spontaneous. He is a facial artist without knowing it, and in power of expression and elocutionary force can give points to our best professional elocutionists.

The plot of these puppet plays does not vary. The play is usually a mediæval melodrama with plenty of action, which is spun out or curtailed according to the inventive powers of the man behind. There does not seem to be any written plot, so that the play affords great scope for "gagging." In short, the skill of the showman is shown in his powers of improvisation, and readiness of resource quite as much as in his elocutionary abilities.

One of these shows I witnessed in Syracuse, while rambling about Sicily a year or two ago, was a fair specimen of the dramatic fare provided for the unsophisticated Sicilian. The theatre, a very bare, barn-like building, was crammed to suffocation with peasants, sailors, and fishermen—the latter all wearing the red Phrygian cap, so that the general effect was that of a stage mob in a French Revolution melodrama. The male portion of the audience, almost without exception, were smoking the peculiarly strong and pungent native cigars, so that a new-comer gathered a general impression of a vast sea of red heads looming through a thick fog.

The plot was what would be termed in the vernacular of the profession a "strong" one, and a hypercritical person would perhaps have thought the action rather swamped the *motif*. But fortunately the audience was anything but critical. The puppets—all "as large as life, and twice as natural"—were worked by a showman behind the scenes, occasionally with more vigour than discretion.

The *dramatis personæ* consisted of half-a-dozen knights in full armour (which they apparently slept in), a pair of villains, the "leading" and the "junior lead," as in the most approved type of modern transpontine drama. Then the necessary "comic relief," demanded equally by the simple-minded Arcadians of Sicily as by the *blasé* London play-goer, was afforded by a comic person mounted on an ass—no doubt the prototype of the world-renowned Blondin donkey—whose cue was evidently to play off the two "bold bad men" against each other. There was only one female character, who, of course, personated the injured and virtuous heroine. This lack of female histrionic talent was due, I ascertained afterwards, to the limited elocutionary range of the small boy, who, concealed in the wings, acted as the heroine's mouthpiece in a shrill falsetto.

The man who was the life and soul of this moving drama—I refer to him who "pulled the strings" in a literal sense—had, most unreasonably, rather a low opinion of the intelligence of his patrons. That there might be no mistake as to which of the puppets was supposed to hold the stage, every word was accompanied by a vigorous

but more or less inappropriate, wagging of the head, and wriggling of the limbs of the supposed speaker. Point was given to what was, presumably, the "fat" of the speech, by the puppet rising a few inches from the ground and stamping with both feet—an artifice which doubtless Lieut. Cole would hold in contempt.

To attempt to describe the plot is far beyond the power of an ignorant *forestiere*. Suffice it to say that all the puppets displayed astonishing feats, both of peace and war. They climbed into the heroine's chamber and out again, pursued by an indignant husband at their heels. They stormed castles, made love, and fought duels. When invention failed on the part of the showman, all the characters would be brought on the stage, with a daring disregard for the unities, to indulge in a wild pantomime rally; and, as a last resource, if interest still slackened, the "second villain" would be brought on to do battle with the "Blondin donkey."

The unrehearsed effects, however, supplied the most grotesque and ludicrous elements of the performance. Sometimes grave difficulties would arise with the mechanism of the puppets, who would be ignominiously swung up into space, or a phantom hand might be seen stealthily protruding from the flies, which would snatch away an offending figure—a practical illustration of a *deus ex machina*. Then the action of the play would be occasionally retarded by a fit of sneezing or coughing on the part of the concealed showman, which temporarily checked the flow of eloquence of the characters in possession of the stage. Sometimes the small boy who took the part of the heroine would chime in late, when muttered curses might be distinctly heard by those in the front row.

These little interludes would cause even the solemn features of the dignified *carabinieri* to relax into a superior sort of smile. It says much for the childlike character and Arcadian simplicity of the Sicilians that they can follow the moving adventure of the puppets for three long hours without a break. Truth compels the writer to add that he himself found that his yearnings were satisfied somewhat earlier in the evening. Perhaps, however, this was in some measure due to his absolute ignorance of the native dialect.



Runaways.

BY FRED. W BROUGHTON.



TROTBURY was (and is) a good old-fashioned country town built on good old-fashioned lines—one long straggling principal street with smaller ones branching off from either side at irregular intervals, pretty much like (except for the irregular intervals) the back-bone of a herring. Not less "good" and old-fashioned were its inhabitants in general, and two of them whom this story concerns, in particular. John Giles and Jacob Stiles. Their very names had an ancient and conservative smack about them, and seemed to suggest rural history and atmosphere. But despite the agricultural and yeoman-like associations which somehow seem to belong to such names as "Giles" and "Stiles," our representatives of these excellent families were (for Trotbury) highly-educated men, and professional men into the bargain. John was the Trotbury lawyer, and Jacob the Trotbury surgeon. They had been fast friends from boyhood, and each rejoiced in the other's welfare or sympathised with the other's sorrows. Apart from their respective professions, they had socially and intellectually much in common, and the greatest difference between them was a residential one. The solicitor lived at one end of the straggling street aforesaid, and the Doctor at the other. Each was a widower, and each had an only child—a son.

One autumn night, some three years ago, Mr. John Giles with a down-cast heart and a grave face was walking from *his* end of the street to that where a red lamp proclaimed the house and surgery of Mr. Jacob Stiles. Upon that same night, and at the same hour, Mr. Jacob Stiles left *his* boundary of Trotbury, and with equal melancholy and gravity was approaching the villa of his friend. At the sign of the "Bull," which stood about half-way between the two homes, the pair met, and as they shook hands, each looked sadly into the other's face, and for a moment was silent.

"I was just coming to see you, Jacob," said Giles.

"Singular," answered Stiles, "I was about to call upon you, John."

"Let us turn into the coffee-room, here," suggested the attorney quietly, and without another word the men entered the hotel. Moodily they seated themselves in the apartment, which fortunately was unoccupied. The bell was rung, the waiter appeared, vanished, and re-appeared with glasses of hot whiskey for the guests. made his exit, closing the door gently after him and leaving the friends alone. Not a syllable had been uttered the while, for the waiter knew the alcoholic requirements of his two customers as well as them-

selves. After sipping at their grog they looked a trifle nervously at one another, and then after a pause, Giles broke the silence.

"I have some news for you, Jacob." And then he fidgetted with his legs. "Not altogether pleasant news either, Jacob, I'm sorry to add."

"The subject on which I want to speak to you, John, is not an agreeable one."

"Dear me, Jacob!" And then *both* men fidgetted for a second or two with their legs.

"Who shall have the first say?" gloomily asked the Doctor.

"Since you paid for the drinks, Jacob," replied Giles, "and as the news we have for each other would not seem to savour of the most cheerful character—well, I'll suffer first. What have you to say to me, Jacob. Eh?"

Stiles hesitated, took another sip at his whiskey, looked up at the ceiling, which was as dark as his own foreboding, fidgetted once more with his legs, and then enquired in a low tone, "Where's your lad Sidney to-night, John?"

The other started. "Strange you should ask about Sid, just at this time, Jacob!"

"Why, John?"

"Because, if I had had the first say, Jacob, I was going to make exactly the same enquiry concerning your own boy, Tom."

Another sip, another upward gaze, and another fidget by both the gentlemen, and then Stiles resumed, "Yes, that *is* a little strange certainly, John."

"But go on," said the lawyer impatiently. "As a rule, one doesn't haste or hanker after uncomfortable information, but what about Sidney? Nothing wrong, eh, Jacob?"

Doctor Stiles did not directly answer his companion's question, but evasively followed up his first by another, "Have you and Sidney lately had any little difference of opinion on any particular subject, John? For instance, as to his future, as to his choice of a profession, or an occupation in life?"

"Again, Jacob, this is most extraordinary, *most* extraordinary," he repeated a little uneasily.

"Nothing very unusual for a father to discuss with his son the latter's prospects in life, John, is there?"

"No, no, Jacob; but it's extraordinary in this way. If the first say had fallen to me, I should again have asked such a question about yourself and Tom as you have just asked me about myself and my son."

It was Jacob's turn now for uneasiness, and his voice plainly betokened this as he spoke.

"Hang it all, John, what does all this mean? We are beating about the bush of a mystery instead of cutting it down out of our way, and coming at once to the point. Tell me what you have to say about my Tom, and I'll make a clean breast of it concerning your Sidney."

"Well then," decisively replied Giles, though his face betrayed that decision had cost him some pain and feeling, "I've had a letter from Tom begging me, as his father's oldest friend, to break some deplorable news to you, and—and—here's the letter, Jacob," he added in a mournful tone, producing a sheet of note paper from his breast pocket.

"But—but John, I've had just such another communication from Sidney, and—here *it* is," stammered the old surgeon in troubled amazement, and pulling from his own pocket the document to which he alluded.

Silently they exchanged the letters with anxious faces, and each putting on his spectacles proceeded to read a solution of the puzzle put so uniquely before him. Let us look over both their shoulders, taking first the note written by young Sidney Giles to his father's old friend, Doctor Stiles. It ran thus :—

"Trotbury, 9th August, 1889.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I've had an awful row with the Governor, and by the time you receive this I shall have left home, never to return unless begged to do so by him. I want you, please, as his oldest and dearest friend, to tell him this as gently and delicately as possible, for though he is utterly in the wrong, he is still my father, and I am reluctant to wantonly give him unnecessary pain. The whole story of our quarrel lies in a nutshell. He wanted me to be a lawyer, and I would as soon be a coal-heaver. I wanted to join an infinitely nobler profession—that of the stage, and he said he would rather follow me to the cemetery rather than that my ambition in this respect should be realised. Hence, in a word, my flight. I have some money still left from my late Aunt Martha's legacy, and, moreover, I have got an opening in the grandest of all callings—the actor's, so that my father need be under no apprehensions as to my means of existence. Give him my love and forgiveness, and tell him he will one day be as proud of his son as educated England is proud of Henry Irving.

"Yours sincerely,

"SIDNEY GILES."

It is needless to quote the letter of the Doctor's son, Tom, to the lawyer *in extenso*, for its reason, purport, and effect were precisely the same as that written by Sidney. True, its verbiage was rougher, and its grammar occasionally questionable, but then, in compensation, its tone was more gracious. He, through his father's friend, asked for his father's forgiveness, and did not, as an aggrieved person, offer to accord his own. But then what mattered the tone of either epistle? The action of both the lads was the same, and inflicted the same grievous blow upon their fathers. The man who stabs with kid gloves on is just as much an assassin as he who uses the dagger with his bare hand, and if Sidney Giles was culpable, Tom Stiles was equally at fault. They were both runaways from their homes, and, what was worse, from their good fathers who loved them so well.

If ever there was reason in the trite expression, "Save me from my friends," it was in this particular instance. Two or three amateur performances at the Trotbury Town Hall, and the injudicious, and often insincere, adulation of gushing intimates, had given birth to a belief in the breasts of these misguided young men

that they possessed a genius which did not exist, and the mischief was done. The mention of deeds and wills and abstracts of title soon grew as hateful to one as the names of pills and potions and prescriptions became obnoxious to the other. The dull, uneventful time at Trotbury—"fog-Trotbury" they began to call the place—waxed intolerable, and, as born actors, they pined for the excitement and distinctions of histrionic life. Poor Sidney! Deluded Tom! They chose their path, and found it too stony for their unshod feet. Foolish lads! They thought to reach the roses that grew by the wayside, and found that their arms were only just long enough to be pricked by the thorns.

Their unhappy parents simultaneously finished the perusal of the fateful letters, and then stared at each other blankly and in silence.

"Well?" said John Giles at last.

"Well?" returned Jacob Stiles.

"What do you propose to do? Advertise for them, send in search for them, or what, Jacob?"

"I shall do whatever you think best, John," faltered the doctor. "I shall do what you do."

"Then you'll wait, Jacob."

"Wait?"

"Yes, wait," sternly said the other, "wait until your son makes you proud of him, wait until he comes back and begs to be taken in again, wait until his bit of money goes, for like Sidney, he has a bit of money, and until starvation drives this d—d mountebank infatuation out of him. At any rate, that's my programme, Jacob Stiles!"

And, in his righteous wrath, the solicitor scowled with a lowering brow, and brought down his clenched fist on the drawing-room table with a bang that set the glasses thereon jingling as if in alarm.

"So be it, John," acquiesced Jacob, but he had a piteous expression on his face. "So be it. I'll do as you do, and wait."

And then the two old men left the hotel and went to their desolate homes with very heavy hearts indeed.

* * * * *

Like their fathers before them, Sidney and Tom had been play-fellows in childhood and school-mates in their youthful days, but, unlike them, they had ever been less of friends than rivals. Yet their friendship had been as sincere as the generality of friendships nowadays, and their rivalry, at the worst, was a good-natured one. Each tried in everything to outshine the other, and if there could be anything to be regretted in this condition of matters, it lay in the fact that neither lad in his emulation had so much his own self-advancement in view as the victory over his competitor. If there had been no Sidney Giles, Tom Stiles would never have passed, or perhaps even reached mere mediocrity, and *vice versa*. Jealousy, of a healthy order, ever existed between them, and never had it burned so fiercely as when they came to exhibit, as amateurs, their dramatic abilities before the Trotbury public. And this spirit was ripe in

each of them when they emerged from the make-believe fame of amateur ranks, and joined *the* profession, as real, genuine *boni-fide* actors whose calling, as Sidney had glowingly put it, was the "noblest of all callings." Their translation came about in this wise. They had seen in a theatrical paper the following seductive advertisement :—

TO Stage Aspirants.—Important.—Ladies and Gentlemen of education and ability desirous of joining the profession should at once communicate with Mr. Bogus Bounceby, Cipher Chambers, Waterloo Road, S.E. Early appearance at a West-End Theatre guaranteed. Small premium required, repayable by instalments in weekly salary.

The young fellows, flushed with the success of their last Trotbury performance, fired with the congratulations of their friends, and almost delirious in their "stage-struck" fever, had straightway opened a correspondence with Mr. Bogus Bounceby, and with the result the reader is already acquainted. Mr. Bogus Bounceby belonged to a class of unprincipled and speculative humbugs, whose days are, in these times of stage progress and government, happily numbered. With a capital of ingenuity he had laid out his plans to raise the more desirable capital of hard cash, and commenced operations with the advertisement just quoted. Alas! there were in the stream many Gileses and Stileses that snapped at Mr. Bounceby's bait, and in a wonderfully short space of time he was in possession of sufficient funds to enable him to fulfil the promises of his advertisement—at any rate, to such an extent as to ensure himself immunity from inconvenient legal consequences. He took an old and long-unoccupied theatre for a month at a rent little more than nominal, for as the house and ill-luck were almost synonyms, the owner was glad to accept any tenant at any price and for any term. By his system of "small premiums," and infinitely smaller salaries, Mr. Bogus Bounceby, with the acumen of an astute Chancellor of the Exchequer, admirably arranged that whatever his audiences might be in their numerical and financial quality, there should be a good margin for substantial profit to be made by him personally out of his scheme. And thus a Company of Incompetence—composed though it was of "ladies and gentlemen of education and ability"—opened that autumn at the Royal Variety Theatre, Bloomsbury, and included amongst its members Mr. Sidney Giles and Mr. Thomas Stiles, our Trotbury runaways. Yet in a fortnight's time these ambitious young comedians were out of an engagement, or, to use a technical expression, "resting." They could not work amicably with Mr. Bounceby, and so voluntarily severed their connection with that enterprising manager, who, however, was not altogether to blame in the matter. He could not give leading rôles to *every* man and woman in his troupe, and if Sidney and Tom respectively chose to throw up in disgust their parts of Glavis and the Innkeeper in "The Lady of Lyons" as disgracefully incompatible with their talent and importance, that was their lookout, and not Mr. Bogus Bounceby's. *He* had other gentlemen of

education and ability at command, only too willing and thankful to jump into their places. And thus, at the very outset of their career, the young men found themselves daily doing nothing but aimlessly promenading the Strand, and getting through the nights as best they might.

But it must by no means be supposed that they regretted the step they had taken, or were appreciably discouraged in the vocation they had chosen. They were destined to make a great name, and still having money in their purse, they could afford to smile, they thought, at momentary disappointment. But the smile degenerated from the triumphant to the merely hopeful, and from the merely hopeful to the sickly, as their days and shillings were spent without any immediate prospect of engagement. Unfortunately the position not only damped the enthusiasm of the pair, but—far worse!—impaired the strength of the long-existing friendship between them. Not seriously, certainly; to a looker-on, perhaps, not at all. But in their idleness they were too prone to get on the dangerous tack of comparing their respective histrionic merits, and the old spirit of jealousy lost to some little extent its healthiness of tone, and grew jaundiced and “nasty.” At any rate, in the middle of September, each thought it judicious to seek rooms for himself, and to dissolve their residential partnership in the Russell Street lodgings which they had hitherto shared. But they parted with every semblance of mutual good will, and wished each other luck with apparent sincerity. The out-of-an-engagement actor’s parade is a circumscribed one, bounded on the east by Newcastle Street, and on the west by Charing Cross, whilst its northern and southern limits are even less distant still from each other. And so Tom and Sidney met pretty well every day, and discussed with each other their future, each drawing on his imagination for his facts, and making out his probabilities far, far more roseate than the other’s. This was about the customary duologue between them.

“Hallo, Tom, old man, how goes it?”

“Promising, Sid, my boy, promising. Am expecting a letter from Toole every day, settling with me for the winter. It’s only a matter of terms.”

“Good,” Sidney would answer. “I’m just in the same position with regard to Wyndham. Between you and me and the post, I don’t feel disposed to take anything less than eight pounds a week. It isn’t good enough.”

“You’re right, dear chappie. I’m sticking out for ten. So long!”

“Ta, ta!” And so each would go his own way, and pray in his own way for something to turn up at a couple of pounds or even thirty shillings a week.

October passed away, and November brought with it to the young men nothing brighter than fog and damp, and melancholy and gloom. Still, both were “resting,” but to rest on vague hopes and a shattered

exchequer is a very poor sort of repose after all. Their meetings in the Strand grew less frequent, not unnaturally when each tried to avoid the other. They had rung the changes on pending negotiations between themselves and Toole and Wyndham and Irving and Terry and Beerbohm Tree and Alexander, until they could ring them no more—that is, without blushing. And then Sidney had ominous patches on his boots, whilst Tom had taken to occasionally wearing paper collars. Now and again, however, they were compelled to exchange a few words when the circumstance of a sudden meeting in the throng of wayfarers brought them face to face, and would not allow of legitimate escape for either. Then they would shake hands limply with each other, and as Sidney tried to hide his patches by the skilful manipulation of his umbrella, Tom's hand would furtively address itself to the caressing of his throat and the concealment of his tell-tale collar.

"Well, what's the best news?" Sidney would ask on such an occasion.

"Nothing, nothing!" the other would reply. "I expect to open at Islington next week."

"Ah, well; better than nothing! I'm just off to rehearsal at Battersea."

Poor lads! They might well be pardoned their lies, for the sad truth shone through them so clearly as to dispel all vice and malice in them.

One evening in December each of them found a note waiting for him at his rooms—if a gloomy back apartment may, by a "*façon de parler*," be called "rooms." The letters were opened with avidity and read with disappointment.

Tom's was from Sidney; Sidney's from Tom. Each wanted a "temporary" loan from the other. Too late to cash cheque that evening, &c., &c., &c. The only compensatory advantage about the correspondence was that each letter answered the other, without involving the necessity of painful and humiliating personal explanations. False pride, or rather real pig-headedness, would not allow them to write to, or to seek as prodigals from their good old fathers the help those fathers would have given—nay, which at that very time they were yearning to give. And so with weary, dogged obstinacy they waited on in their wretched hope that the cloud must break soon, that the long lane must have a turning. Alas, in their case, the lane was a *cul-de-sac*, and the full-stop was not far from either.

It was Christmas Eve. Into the kitchen of a common lodging-house in the neighbourhood of Westminster entered nervously and with trepidation, half-ashamed and half-fearful, as if apprehensive of danger, Sidney Giles. He was pale and ill and hungry and sick at heart. He was too brave (or too cowardly—it is for moralists to say which) to throw himself into the Thames, or he would have done so, and ended his misery. There he was, the generous dispenser of forgiveness to his father who was to be so proud of him, the genius, the actor, the haughty, the self-confident; there he was, famished

and penniless, in an underground kitchen that was filled with the human refuse of alley and slum, and that reeked with the stench of unwholesome food, and the fumes of the coke fire that cooked it. He had spent his last coin, and pawned his last pawnable possession for the coppers which were to give him a dirty bed to lie upon this "merry Christmas" eve. And when morning came—what then? He dared not think of it; he could not think of it. He could only slink unnoticed into a corner of the place, and hiding his head in his hands, weep tearlessly in his mortification and disappointment. How long he thus sat, he could not himself have told. But he was strangely disturbed by a voice that was not strange to him, though it was more tremulous and gentle than when he last heard it.

"Sid, old fellow!"

Sidney started, looked up, and saw—Tom Stiles.

"Why, Tom——" he murmured, but got no further.

"What are you doing here, Sid?"

"I—I—had often heard of these places, and I—I—came to see what one was like, and to study character, and—and—oh, Tom!"—here he broke down and sobbed bitterly—"I had nowhere else to go."

Tom made a dab at his eye with his handkerchief, and accompanied each sob of his companion with a sniff of his own.

"Look here, Sid, we've been a couple of fools!"

"And frauds, Tom! But why are you here?"

"Because, like you, I'm stone-broke."

"And it's Christmas-day to-morrow," muttered Sidney. "I wonder what they're doing at Trotbury, Tom."

"Let us go and see," said the other, resolutely and manfully. "We're not ashamed to confess our folly to ourselves, and surely we're not going to be blackguards enough to refuse to confess our sin and ingratitude to our governors!"

"It's rather making virtue of necessity though, Tom, isn't it?"

"Better make virtue of anything than stay longer in the midst of vileness like this," he answered, as a torrent of filthy language fell from the lips of a fellow-lodger who was disputing the right of another rough to the immediate use of the common gridiron whereon to prepare his bloater.

"But we've no money!" exclaimed Sidney.

"I've a good overcoat that will sell or pledge for enough to see us through. Come on, Sid; I'm turning faint in this hole. For God's sake let us clear out!"

* * * * *

John Giles and Jacob Stiles had from time immemorial spent their Christmas-eves together over pipe and glass at the house of one or the other of them, and they made no exception *this* Christmas-eve. But their chat was sepulchral, and their festivity a miserable mockery. "The boys" were not there to gladden the eyes of their fond old fathers with their presence, or their ears with their songs. And their names were never mentioned, nor their absence ever referred to

That Christmas-eve to the lawyer and the doctor was a wretched farce; "merry" Yuletide to them was an atrocious burlesque with the fun left out. And when eleven o'clock struck Jacob rose, with an inward sentiment of thankfulness, to go home. But just as John was helping him on with his overcoat there came a half-hearted sort of rat-tat at the front door, and this was followed by a gentle tap on the window-pane. And next the old men heard voices outside which set them trembling with a great and joyful excitement.

The first voice said: "If you please, Doctor Stiles is wanted to give a certificate of sanity two young vagabonds who until now have been rampant idiots."

"That's Tom!" whispered Jacob, as pale as a ghost.

Then the second voice said: "Lawyer Giles is wanted also to plead for mercy on behalf of two prodigal sons, who have come home to tell their fathers that they have sinned!"

"That's Sidney!" murmured John, shaking like an aspen.

The next moment the scrapegraces were in their fathers' arms, and—and, well, that's all, or at least all that we can be permitted to tell of that Christmas-eve meeting. But of course there's a moral for all such young men as Sidney Giles and Tom Stiles. It's this:—

Don't go play-acting when you can't act!



On Theatrical Apprenticeship.

BY GEORGE ALEXANDER.



HIS has become a serious question, and one that must be answered without loss of time. Competition in the race of life has become so keen that numbers of young people gifted by nature and position, that would some years ago never have given a thought to the stage as a profession or means of employment, now flock to it. Have they really a gift for it? They have education and good looks, mix in the best society, dress well, and many of them are capable amateur actors and actresses. This inclination for the stage may be so fostered, encouraged, and instructed, that in many cases it may bring forward valuable recruits. How is this to be done? There are but few, if any, stock companies in which an aspirant has, in the course of his *apprenticeship* (and I use the word advisedly), such opportunities of perfecting himself in his art as did Mr. S. B. Bancroft, who "in four years and four months made his attempts in three hundred and forty-six parts." Ours are the days of long runs. A play is a success in London. So soon as it has reached its fiftieth or hundredth representation, a touring company is organised. Young inexperienced actors and actresses come to see it a few times, learn the words like parrots, are engaged, and make the character they have to assume as close a copy of the original as they possibly can. Instead of being an education, the engagement is a positive drawback to them. I shall be told that there are teachers, such as Mr. Hermann Vezin (to whom I myself am much indebted for encouragement and advice in my early career, though never a pupil of his), Mr. Walter Lacy, Miss Genevieve Ward, Miss Fanny Robertson, Mr. Henry Neville, Mr. Ben Terry, and many others, who can teach their pupils even more than the mere rudiments of their art; but in the first place the fees are heavy, and in the second, though the pupil may take his lessons, he has very few opportunities of putting those lessons into actual practice. I admit that there is great value in such teaching, but *without the practice*, if an aspirant have an earnest love for the art he is cultivating, my impression is that he would learn more as a super on the Lyceum stage, if he took note of, and profited by, the excellent examples of histrionic perfection always to be seen there. I used the word apprenticeship advisedly, but, lest it should wring the withers of the fastidious I will substitute for it the term "articles," which smacks more of the learned professions. Why should not an actor (that term of course including actress) sign articles, or "keep his term?" The church has its deacon, the army is "sub," the navy its midddy, the law

its "term of probation," the trade its apprentice. In all of these, before being admitted to full benefits, there is a probationary term or examination. The aspirant to the stage has nothing of this at present, and the consequence is that the dramatic profession is crowded with a number of young people who can never hope to make more than the barest livelihood, and who will never rise even to mediocrity.

A school of dramatic art is, in my opinion, exactly what is wanted in England at the present time—an idea which, I am perfectly aware, is no novel one. Such an institution would be aided and supported by our leading actors, who would no more hesitate to give their time to aiding such a valuable school by "coaching" the aspirants, and stage-managing the plays in which they appeared, than the leading physicians and surgeons grudge the time spent in lecturing at the hospitals.

To accomplish these ends, the leading managers and those who are interested in the drama and its future would have to contribute funds for the school, which would, I fear, not be able to support itself without contributions and patronage. Plenty of these, however, would doubtless be readily forthcoming. A few months would be sufficient to test the fitness and capability of the student; at the end of which time he should undergo his preliminary examination before members of the committee. Successful—his course of study would continue, and eventually he might be "articled" for a term to a manager at a small but definite and increasing salary. Should, however, the student be considered *unfitted* for the stage by these competent judges, he would be told so plainly and unmistakably; and the beneficial result obtained would be twofold: on the one hand the managers would know where to look for promising recruits, while on the other failure in the examination would *encourage* the would-be actor who has no real aptitude for the profession, to adopt some other walk in life. The young lady, who has perhaps nothing but a pretty face, and sometimes not even that, to recommend her, would turn her attention to type-writing or the care of children, or to other occupations for which nature intended her rather than "fretting her hour upon the stage."



Plays of the Month.

"THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR."

Farical comedy, in three acts, by H. GRAHAM.

First produced in London at the Strand Theatre, on Friday afternoon, November 18th, 1892.

Robert Faddicum, L.C.C.	Mr. E. W. GARDEN.	A Cabman	.. ..	Mr. CHARLES DAVIES.
Dick Wellington	.. Mr. YORKE STEPHENS.	Mrs. Perks	.. ..	Miss NELLY WILLIAMS.
Tom Doubleton	.. Mr. W. BONNEY.	Mabel Faddicum	..	Miss MAUD DOUGLAS.
Jack Wilding	.. Mr. ROLAND ATWOOD.	Kitty	.. ..	Miss NELLIE DALLAS.
William Cripps	.. Mr. W. LESTOCQ.	Lottie Singleton	..	Miss FANNY BROUGH.
Det.-Insp. Catchpole	.. Mr. ERNEST HENDRIE.			

More like a Palais Royal farce than anything else, Mr. Graham's ingenious intricacy would pass very well for the work of a Frenchman. It is as light as puff-pastry, quite as palatable, and very much more digestible; but like that toothsome confection it would be spoilt by cold-blooded investigation of its ingredients, if, indeed, it did not defy analysis. One may, however, safely scrutinise the jam. This consists of an exhilarating mixture of a conscientious County Councillor, many embarrassing predicaments for the poor gentleman, and a misplaced affection of his for a music-hall "artiste." This sort of jam is just now to the taste of everyone—excepting County Councillors—and seeing how remarkably clever is Mr. Graham's handling of his maze of complications, the immediate success of the farce was nothing to wonder at. A piece like this, bristling with good lines, studded with diverting situations, is practically actor-proof. Almost any kind of treatment will do, and the best actors are not really essential. Mr. Yorke Stephens nevertheless played with wonderful "go," and Mr. Garden and Miss Brough rushed to his aid with all kinds of diverting tones, gestures, and "business." The performance to stand out prominently was, however, the "chuckle-headed" detective—as Mark Twain would call him—of Mr. Hendrie, an actor possessed of boundless humour; but it is not to the credit of managers that I cannot add of boundless opportunity for displaying it. Mr. Hendrie is one of the ninety-and-nine over whom no fuss is ever made, while eulogy is poured upon some hundredth worth not a hundredth part of him.

"MA MIE ROSETTE."

A romantic opera, in two acts, the English version by GEORGE DANCE, and the music by IVAN CARYLL.

From the French Libretto of MM. PREVAL and LIORAT, music by PAUL LACOME.

Produced at the Globe Theatre, on Thursday, November 17th, 1892.

Henry IV.	.. ..	Mr. EUGENE OUDIN.	Martha	.. ..	Miss JESSIE BOND.
Colonel Cognac	.. ..	Mr. LAWRENCE D'ORSAY.	Clochette	.. ..	Miss MARIE BROOKE.
Bouillon	.. ..	Mr. FRANK WYATT.	Therese	.. ..	Miss FLORENCE MELVILLE.
Segur	.. ..	Mr. R. SCOTT FISHE.	Nichette	.. ..	Miss DAY FORD.
Winzar	.. ..	Mr. W. ROLPH.	Petan	.. ..	Miss BLANCHE WINTER.
Moustajon	.. ..	Mr. CAHNS JAMES.	Alphonse	.. ..	Miss RITA PATON.
Vincent	.. ..	Mr. COURTICE POUNDS.	Rosette	.. ..	Mdlle. NESVILLE.
Corisande	.. ..	Miss JANNY McNULTY.			

Countless times have dreams been presented on the stage. Notable instances are those of *The Bells* and *La Cigale*. But rarely has higher dramatic value been attached to the situation than in this excellent musical drama. Rosette, a village beauty, is to marry Vincent, but Henri Quatre passes, looks, and sees that she is fair;

and the lover's path is promptly strewn with thorns. Seeing that her head is turned, Vincent volunteers for the wars. Henri invites Rosette to his chateau hard by—to come with the morning milk, in fact—and the heroine, overcome by a conflict of emotions, swoons. In act ii, she is seen at the castle. Henri makes passionate love, and she consents to don fine raiment, and appear at a ball given in her honour, thus signifying her acceptance of his suit; but Vincent arrives just in time with news of a great victory. The king, infuriated, despatches him, as David did Uriah, with a letter to his general boding death. Corisande, the reigning mistress, reveals the treachery, for her own ends. Vincent surprises the King at midnight making love to Rosette, roundly upbraids him, and is ordered away to be shot—when the lights die down, the castle fades, and behold, there is Rosette, a village maiden once more, prettily recovering from her swoon, and that painful vision of the second act! Henri is rejected, Vincent made happy, and the play is at an end. The story is well told, the comic relief got from a valet who passes as a nobleman and a twice-widowed peasant who passes for an *ingénue*, is fresh and lively. There are a score of melodious ballads, and the spectacle is worthy of the Lyric in *La Cigale* days. Moreover, no such play has enjoyed better all-round acting. Mr. Oudin is the gallant Henri Quatre himself, Mdle. Nesville finds delightful exercise for her dainty method, Mr. Pounds bears himself with heroic fervour, and Miss Bond and Mr. Wyatt with dance, song, quip, and *moue*, lighten the shadows of the drama with unique dexterity. “Ma Mie Rosette” is at once the best-mounted, best-acted, most dramatic musical play seen since the “Yeomen of the Guard.”

“THE OLD LADY.”

A comedy, in three acts, by C. HADDON CHAMBERS.
First produced at the Criterion Theatre, on Saturday, 19th November, 1892.

Colonel Lund	Mr. W. H. VERNON.	Barker	Mr. S. VALENTINE.
Count de Chartres ..	Mr. H. STANDING.	Croupier	Mr. H. DE LANGE.
Charley Arathoon ..	Mr. F. KERR.	Mdlle. Le Grande ..	Miss R. FILIPPI.
Mr. Smythe	Mr. WELTON DALE.	Miss Margery Lund ..	Miss ELLIS JEFFREYS.
Mr. McDoggerty	Mr. D. S. JAMES.	Miss Lund	Mrs. JOHN WOOD.

A dramatic curiosity! A play in which the central figure is a female octogenarian, presumably paralytic, imprisoned in an invalid chair—and this hapless lady impersonated by the liveliest, alertest, nimblest, spryest actress on the stage, Mrs. John Wood! As the humourless caricature of life at Monte Carlo was unfolded, the wonder increased how Mr. Chambers—the expert creator of “Captain Swift” and “The Idler”—could have failed to detect its lack of interest, fun, and spirit; but that feeling faded and died out before the blank amazement awakened by the ludicrous misuse of an actress of unrivalled comedy powers. “The Old Lady” will ever be remembered for its association with the most prodigal waste of talent on record. The calculated ineffectiveness of Mrs. Wood's position was almost equalled, however, by the plentiful lack of opportunity afforded by the part of nearly everyone of the other players. Miss Filippi returned to the stage to suffer like a martyr, and the other popular actors and actresses also could only elicit compassion. A smug and sanctimonious man-servant proved humorous in the hands of Mr. Valentine; but that was all. “The Old Lady” was, indeed, nothing but a nine, or, to be strictly accurate, a fourteen days' wonder; and disappeared, regretted I should think not even by her author.

“FROM GULF TO GULF.”

An original play, in four acts and a prologue, by HENRY JOHN SMITH.
Produced at the Avenue Theatre, on Tuesday afternoon, November 29th, 1892.

Earl of Montreal	Mr. G. WENTWORTH.	Stanly	Mr. A. WOOD.
Clarence Faulkland	Mr. T. B. THALBERG.	Job	Mr. JOHN CARTER.
Lawdon	Mr. C. GOLLAN.	Servant	Mr. W. CHANDLER.
Sir Francis Dale	Mr. W. WINTON.	Eveline	Miss D. WEBSTER.
Sir Henry Vane	Mr. R. LAMBERT.	Lady St. Cla're	Miss K. CALTON.
Sir Percy Austin	Mr. H. WENMAN.	Lady Marchmont	Miss F. LECLERCQ.
Lord Esk	Mr. MANNERS.	Lady Vane	Miss D. DANVERS.
Lord Fenwicke	Mr. G. H. KERSLEY.	Nora	Miss H. CROSS.
Tracy	Mr. JULIAN CROSS.		

As a ruthless attempt to force a hearing for the dead-and-gone school of the late lamented Mr. Sheridan Knowles, this long-winded effort of Mr. Smith is to be severely deprecated. It is well sometimes to be confronted with the misdeeds of our forefathers, if only to have impressed upon us how not to do the particular matter in question. But such a course is least necessary in the matter of plays, of which only too many modern specimens are submitted annually with this chastening intent. Mr. Knowles was very well in his way, for his loquacity and ponderosity were not his entire stock-in-trade. Behind them lay a very real perception of the dramatic, and some appreciation of the human, in the conduct of his stage puppets' lives. But if at any time there was room—and an audience—for the master, emphatically there is none for the pupil. Mr. Smith has studied in the school with assiduity, but his acquirements embrace not the solid merits of his teacher, but merely his disfiguring faults. Now and then, during the administration of this soporific concoction of hoary retainers, Holcroft “merchants,” forgers, gamblers, thieves, nobles, duellists, and assassins—all prone to express themselves at great length in passable blank verse—a glimpse is caught of dramatic power, but so sketchy are the characters, so indistinctly do they show through the mists of verbosity which envelop them, that the only clear impression obtained is one of utter boredom—boredom which neither the grace and refinement of Mr. Thalberg, nor the sonorous declamation of Mr. Wentworth, nor the intense earnestness of Miss Webster could do much to dissipate.

“LIBERTY HALL.”

A comedy, in four acts, by R. C. CARTON.
First produced at the St. James's Theatre, on Saturday evening, 3rd December, 1892.

Mr. Owen	Mr. G. ALEXANDER.	Luscombe	Mr. V. SANBURY.
William Todman	Mr. E. RIGHTON.	Mr. Hickson	Mr. ALFRED HOLLES.
Hon. Gerald Harringay ..	Mr. BEN WEBSTER.	Miss Hickson	Miss AILSA CRAIG.
Mr. Pedrick	Mr. NUTCOMBE GOULD.	Crafer	Miss FANNY COLEMAN.
J. Briginshaw	Mr. H. H. VINCENT.	Amy Chilworth	Miss MAUDE MILLETT.
Robert Binks	Master R. SAKER.	Blanche Chilworth ..	Miss MAHON TERRY.

There is only one phrase for Mr. Carton's new comedy, “A pretty play.” The phrase denotes a feminine vocabulary, and fitly, for it is the feminine judgment which will approve the work. Pretty and sweet, these are the adjectives with which Mr. Alexander's theatre will ring for weeks, months possibly, to come. Quite the perfection of prettiness, in fact, is this worthy successor to Mr. Carton's pretty “Sunlight and Shadow,” and the essence of sweetness also. So very, very sugary is it, indeed, that none but the sweet-toothed—again the feminine portion—will endure to the end without a feeling of satiety, if not of revolt. This comes of Mr. Carton having steeped himself to the eyebrows in Dickensian sentiment, as the youthful Cratchits did in sage and onions upon a certain memorable Christmas Day. If only he had been a little less uncompromising! If he had not followed quite so closely the example of the actor who.

to play "Othello," blacked himself from head to foot ! But Mr. Carton is a passionate devotee of Dickens. The creator of Caleb Plummer is the god of his idolatry. He would forgive, perhaps approve, the sentimental vapourings of a Steerforth, or a hideous excrescence like Mowcher. Nor is this to be counted unto him for aught but righteousness. A whole-hearted worship is an ennobling thing. For the sake of it Mr. Carton may be forgiven much, even the damning faults of "Liberty Hall," which crowd thick and fast upon the memory, immediately one begins to think. But why catalogue them ? A pleasanter, and saner, occupation is to do as children do—make-believe ; and pretend that life as Mr. Carton sees it is life in very truth ! that two well-born, proud, and lovely orphans would sooner accept the bounty of an unknown poor old second-hand book-selling uncle (also a worshipper of Dickens), than remain under the ancestral roof, pensioners of an unknown wealthy cousin ! that the cousin, to humble their pride, and win the love of the staid elder, would accept a place as shopman in that shabby temple in Bloomsbury, sacred to the author of "Pickwick," and cheerfully endure the discomfort of a third-floor back, his own bed-making, haddocks for tea, and pinching poverty always in sight, in the pursuit of a love for love's sake alone ! that the functions of Providence can be usurped, and a baronet shopman can restore the Golden Age, turn misery to happiness, banish discontent, reap charity where disdain grew thick and rank, rescue Eve from the Serpent's wiles, and transform Bloomsbury into Paradise ! Dreams, idle dreams ; but then, why not ? A day-dream not devoted to visions of self-aggrandisement can work but little harm, and this one of "Liberty Hall" will do no worse than soften hard hearts, and shed a genial ray of kindliness upon all who practise it. For Mr. Carton has caught the trick of the master. He exudes homely sentiment and fun from every pore. His only villain is a Tackleton, and he spares us the pain of seeing one single heart wrung by this Briginshaw Tackleton's brief cruelty. Of the rest nothing could exceed the loveliness. Women and men alike, they are all sweet souls. The bookseller is something more. But for his theatrical, as well as Dickensian, trick of speaking in figure, of comparing everyone to books, Mr. Todman would be wonderfully human. Even as he is, with all his imperfections on his head, the simple little fellow, with the heart of a child, the tongue of a Cockney, and the generosity of a Samaritan, is quite alive—which most of his companions (very properly, seeing that they are but figures appropriate to dreams) are not. Mr. Alexander sees, as none but Mr. Irving does, that justice is done to every play he handles, and "Liberty Hall" is made the utmost of. Individually the actors, as a rule, call for no remark, but collectively their work is well-nigh faultless. As a producer of modern plays, indeed, Mr. Alexander stands head and shoulders above any of his rivals. Mr. Righton's is the finest performance, but then his is the finest (and easiest) part. He lacks pathos at one or two points, and his physique is a little too comfortable for the sentiment of which Mr. Carton has made him the subject and object, but within his limitations the actor is entirely admirable. Miss Coleman as an autocratic "slavey," Master Saker as an amorous shop-boy, and Miss Ailsa Craig as a gaunt "guest" of many summers, display much humour ; Miss Millett as a would-be Olivia exhibits unsuspected power and pathos ; Miss Terry is by turns interesting and touching as the proud elder sister ; and Mr. Alexander's suavity and grace, his polish and courtliness, and quiet, slightly-caustic humour, equip him to perfection for the rather too

preachy, rather too Providential, rather too watchful and potent Fairy Prince. An outburst of admiration for the Dickensian method and atmosphere greeted the play, and upon its immense and immediate success eager hopes were at once based of a revival of the romantic drama.

"TO-DAY."

A comedy, in three acts, by CHARLES BROOKFIELD, founded upon "Divorçons," by VICTORIEN SARDOU.

First produced at the Comedy Theatre, on Monday evening, December 5th, 1892.

Charles Prothero ..	Mr. C. H. HAWTREY.	An Epicure ..	Mr. D. RICHARDSON.
Arthur Dismore..	Mr. JAMES NELSON.	A Lady with an open	} Miss L. ELLIS.
Bertie Twyford ..	Mr. CHAS. BROOKFIELD.	mind ..	
Mr. Chauncey Chatwin	Mr. W. WYES.	A Syren ..	Miss C. CARLYLE.
Martin ..	Mr. CHARLES MILTON.	Her Admirer ..	Mr. E. H. KELLY.
Mrs. Chauncey Chatwin	Miss V. FEATHERSTON.	Two Friends ..	{ Mr. G. E. SHEPHEARD.
Muriel Airley ..	Miss E. MATTHEWS.		{ Mr. R. VAUX.
Miss Orme ..	Miss L. HENDERSON.	A Portuguese ..	Mr. R. MALONE.
Caroline ..	Miss H. POLAK.	Another Portuguese..	Mr. N. GILBERT.
Kitty Prothero ..	Miss LOTTIE VENNE.	An English Lady ..	Miss ADA MELLOR.
Hughie ..	Mr. C. MEYRICK.	A Lady of Experience	Miss M. WILTON.
Claudia ..	Mr. GRANVILL BARKER.	A Very Young Man ..	Mr. L. HARBROD.
Johnnie ..	Mr. G. GROSSMITH, JUN.	Page ..	Master TURNER.
Cis ..	Mr. ARTHUR ROYSTON.	Karl ..	Mr. LANGHAM.
Emile ..	Mr. WILTON HERIOT.	Hippolyte ..	Mr. STRAHAN.
Anglo-Indian ..	Mr. H. HUDSON.	Fritz ..	Mr. SCHULTZ.
American Tourist	Mr. E. PERCY.	Peter ..	Mr. MARSDUSCHK.
His Wife ..	Miss F. FARR.	Saul ..	Mr. C. MANNERS.
His Daughter ..	Miss M. BLAYNEY.	Coloured Waiter ..	Mr. ELLIOT.
Her Sister ..	Miss A. DUKES.		

In his exquisite caricature of Mr. Oscar Wilde, Mr. Brookfield displayed not only a pretty wit, but a faculty for reproducing the actual man, which in pictorial art would have made him a rival to "Ape" and "Spy" of *Vanity Fair*. This faculty it chiefly is which he lays under contribution in "To-Day." In the course of his adaptation, "Divorçons" and its antipathetic wife and husband fade into the background, and the foreground is devoted to one of the unwholesome, epicene, limp emasculates—the "Nancy" impotents whom the dung-hill of "smart society" has generated of recent years—and whom everybody knows by sight, by name and by vile repute. Upon this figure Mr. Brookfield has lavished pains and skill, and if it be not exactly a portrait, it is easy to see from whom his Bertie Twyford has been studied. As a playwright, he is at fault in making this insufferable bundle of affectations, with his ready tears, his stiffs, his drivelling songs, inane simperings and pigeon-breasted tie, responsible for creating a division between two people of healthy instincts and common-sense. Or he has erred in so depicting the jealous Prothero and his piqued and piquant wife. Anyway, the figures do not harmonise. But, this said, nothing but praise remains for the wit and pungent satire with which Mr. Brookfield has sacrificed a loathed and detested class. Bertie, with his attendant court of Hughies, Claudies, Archies, is worth going far to see and jeer at; and they and the excellent scene of the Savoy Restaurant, reminiscent of one of Mr. Anstey's *Voces Populi*, will doubtless carry the play. Without them the piece would, in truth, be dull, for though the episode of reconciliation between the quarrelsome pair is treated with delightful sincerity and feeling by Miss Venne and Mr. Hawtreys, it is over-lengthy, and somehow seems out of place in a play for the most part frankly farcical. In short, Mr. Brookfield, while kodak-ing fellow feeders in dining saloons or imbecile chappies born to play tame-cat to unsusceptible, passionless females, is in his element; but, when he comes to play-making, lamentably fails—fails so utterly indeed that never does a recollection occur that

his work is really a version of a comedy by the greatest living master of construction and stage-craft—Victorien Sardou.

“UNCLE MIKE.”

A new play, in four acts, by FLORENCE WARDEN.
First produced at Terry's Theatre, on Thursday evening, December 8th, 1892.

Sir Richard Ingleby ..	Mr. W. CALVERT.	Cabman	Mr. J. BRABOURNE.
Mr. Stapleton Turner ..	Mr. CHARLES FULTON.	Burton	Mr. H. R. LAMBERT.
Neville Stapleton ..	{ Mr. HENRY V. ESMOND.	Johnny Gibson ..	Master MANSFIELD.
Turner		Lady Ingleby ..	Miss C. ADDISON.
Claude Vereker	Mr. W. T. LOVELL.	Gwendolen Ingleby ..	Miss HELEN FORSYTH.
Egerton Curtis	Mr. C. M. HALLARD.	Mrs. Stapleton Turner ..	Miss ALEXES LEIGHTON.
Michael Ventriss	Mr. EDWARD TERRY.	Madge	Miss ANNIE HILL.
Bunting	Mr. FRED THORNE.	Midge	Miss LUCY WEBLING.
Postman	Mr. E. THORP.		

Uncle Mike is a singular being. Upon reflection he is not only singular, but plural. Out of the city he is Dr. Jekyll, in the city he is Mr. Hyde. By lending money at sixty per cent. in one quarter, he can afford to be philanthropic in the other when he is amongst the young people who see in him no more than a nice old gentleman, who will make himself generally useful for the bare asking. A double-faced creature like this, one side angel and the other demon, is so for a purpose, naturally; and the purpose is that the weak old man shall acquire such power over the snobs and bullies of the party that presently he may “swell wisely” and control the fates alike of his *protégées* and aversions. This he does with effect when the proper time comes, and being in his own little sphere all mighty, the good he endows with everlasting happiness, and the bad he casts out where there is doubtless much strong language and gnashing of teeth. The character in essence is at once seen to be dramatic, but unfortunately the *raison d'être* of Uncle Mike's “contrairiness” is not very clear. It is difficult, except for stage purposes, to accept so hopeless a contradiction. Save to work in some telling situations there appears no reason why he should be usurious or why benevolent. Had there been some compelling power before which he was driven into avaricious habits, and which some new influence should gradually destroy, then this figure would have commanded interest. As he stands, however, Uncle Mike is a mere *deus ex machina*, who varies the monotony by appearing now and then as *diabolus ex machina*; and nothing could ensure any close attention being paid to him save the droll personality and individual quaintness of an actor like Mr. Terry. Practically he is the play—which therefore for Terryites will be all it need be, although caviare to non-Terryites. A cursory inspection of the play-bill discloses the amount of talent lavished upon minor parts—such “talent” as Mr. Fulton, Mr. Esmond, Miss Addison, Miss Forsyth, and Miss Leighton—but for the most part it is wasted, Uncle Mike being to all intents the beginning and the end and likewise the middle of Miss Warden's brightly written, but ill-constructed baseless play.

“WIDOWERS' HOUSES.”

A didactic realistic play, in three acts, by GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.
First produced at the Royalty Theatre by the Independent Theatre Society on Friday evening, December 9th, 1892.

Dr. Trench	Mr. W. J. ROBERTSON.	Porter	Mr. W. ALISON.
Cokane	Mr. A. WHITTAKER.	Blanche Sartorius ..	Miss FLORENCE FARR.
Mr. Sartorius	Mr. T. W. PERCYVAL.	Maid	Miss N. DE SILVA.
Lickcheese	Mr. JAMES WELCH.		

Trench and “Charles his friend”—otherwise Cokane—while travelling, run across Sartorius and his daughter. The mention of

Trench's aunt, Lady Roxdale, serves as an introduction to these snobs. The young people strike up an acquaintance; Blanche recalls to the Doctor's hazy recollection conversations they had on a steam-boat on the Rhine, gushingly confesses to having made notes of his discourse upon microbes and germs, and within five minutes has her reward in being called "Blanche" and receiving a proposal. Sartorius, hungry for social connections, consents to the engagement upon condition that Trench shall break the news at once to his titled relations and be able to show letters expressing their readiness to receive his wife. To "Charles his friend" is deputed the task of drafting the first letter, and to him Sartorius imparts the information that he is a wealthy London landlord, on a part of whose property Trench holds a mortgage. In act ii., the character of Sartorius is made clear. He is a slum-landlord, and one of his agents for squeezing the rent from his starving tenants is the abject, cringing Lickcheese. This poor wretch is dismissed for spending a few shillings upon repairs to a rotten staircase, and in begging Trench to intercede for him he gradually opens his hearer's eyes to the infamous fount of Sartorius' wealth. Moved to indignation by the recital, Trench declines all pecuniary assistance from his would-be father-in-law, but Blanche scorns life upon a paltry £700 a-year—the amount of Trench's income—hot words pass, and a considerable rift within the lute appears. Sartorius makes known to Trench the latter's share in his responsibilities through the mortgage upon which he pays seven per cent. interest. Trench is at once reconciled to the situation and would be to Blanche, but she has changed her mind, and now shrinks from the man she loved, and he and his ever-obtrusive friend are shown the door. In act iii., Lickcheese has blossomed into a plutocrat, and comes to Sartorius to disclose a scheme by which a heap of money may be made. The County Council propose to run a new street through some of his slum-property. By patching it up and letting part of it to his late rent-collector, double the amount of compensation may be got. But it is essential that Trench should join in the conspiracy. This, after much argument, during which he is convinced that his income will suffer if he does not "stand in"—and a remarkable interview with Blanche, in which she raves at him for five minutes and then throws her arms round his neck and kisses him—he consents to do, and the curtain falls upon the little group of sordid schemers chuckling over the prospects of rich spoil. The play is full to the brim of inconsistencies and crudities, but wonderful cleverness is shown in the dramatic handling of undramatic materials like blue-books and the merely talked-of horrors of the slums. Much of the dialogue, too, is extremely clever and pungent. And with the further advantage of one admirably-drawn character—the ragamuffin Lickcheese, Mr. Shaw's play is, at any rate, equal to arousing and holding the attention. Its faults, however, as a piece of dramatic work are innumerable, and only the occasional brilliance of the dialogue and the really fine acting of Mr. Welch averted general condemnation—which did, indeed, overtake an unnatural incident (of the heroine maltreating her maid), and by consent was visited upon all the players, saving only Mr. Welch and perhaps Mr. Percyval.

OPERA.

"IRMENGARDA."

A grand opera, by LEONHARD EMIL BACH.

First produced at Covent Garden Theatre, on Thursday evening, December 8th, 1892.

Irmengarda.. ..	Mme. GIULIA VALDA.	Bueckhard	SIGNOR ABRAMOFF.
Brigida	Mlle. GUERCIA.	Il Re	SIGNOR DE VASCHETTI.
Cuniberto	Signor GUETARY.	Luca.. ..	M. DUFREICHE.

In Suabia, in the middle-ages, Conrad III. besieged the town of Weinsberg, but gave permission to the women of the town to depart with such valuables as they could carry in their arms. Responding to the offer, they bore away their husbands, brothers, sweethearts, sons, and so won from the king, who luckily for them had a sense of humour, a full pardon. This is the subject of the opera, but three librettists have succeeded in muddling even this simple scheme, and practically the only dramatic incident is the visit of the heroine and Brigida, disguised as youths, to the besiegers' camp, the sally of the women bearing the garrison in their arms not being attempted. Upon this plotless foundation the Chevalier Bach has raised no solid structure of melody. His airs are often tuneful, but of music appropriate and dramatic, of music worthy of the sonorous title "grand opera," there was rarely more than a hint. The composer leans now towards Wagner, now towards Liszt, anon towards the antique Italians, and the result is akin to that achieved by the trio of librettists—a muddle. There is, however, distinct promise in the work, and this promise, when the Chevalier shall have found his own musical mind and an inspiring libretto, he will doubtless amply redeem. Lavishly mounted by Sir Augustus Harris, and with the various colourless characters most efficiently rendered by the strong cast, all that could be was done for the opera, the interpretation of which evoked great applause. Madame Valda in particular distinguished herself, acting and singing with great force and true feeling; and Mr. Carl Armbruster conducted with even more than his wonted sympathy and care.

REVIVAL OF THE "ARABIAN NIGHTS" AT THE COMEDY.

This was consummated on the 5th November, and meant a supremely refreshing mental bath in the artistic absurdities of Mr. Grundy, Mr. Hawtrey, Mr. Penley, and Miss Venne. In this epic of nonsense the author cannot be detached from the actors, nor they from him. As a quartette they must be regarded—a quartette which utters the very harmony of mirth. Take one away, and three no doubt remain, but harmony is turned to discord. Four in one, and one in four, they stand square to the winds of criticism, which blow idly by them, leaving them unshaken. A new arrival at the Comedy deserves attention, though. This is Miss Lizzie Henderson, a comedy actress of great humour and breadth of style. Already she begins to remind one of Mrs. John Wood in earlier days, and what she may eventually do it is almost beyond one's courage to hint.

REVIVAL OF "DOROTHY" AT THE TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

Produced at the Gaiety in September, 1886, with Miss Marion Hood as Dorothy, Mr. Arthur Williams as Lurcher, and the shapely and tuneful Mr. Hayden Coffin as Harry, transferred in December of the same year to the Prince of Wales's, and exactly two years later conveyed to the Lyric with a changed company—Miss Marie Tempest being the heroine, and Mr. Ben Davies the Geoffrey Wilder—the famous comedy-opera of Mr. Alfred Cellier and Mr. B. C. Stephenson has known both downs and ups of fortune. Once sure of its hold on public favour, however, the piece flourished like a green bay-tree, and not a sign is yet visible of any decrease in its—upon the whole—well-deserved popularity. That this is in the present instance, as it was in the past, due in a measure to the excellence of the acting admits of little doubt. For with the comic-operator it is a point of honour

to see the same thing thirty, forty, fifty times, and even the charms of Dorothy must wear a little thin when subjected to such excessive admiration. Moreover several of the features of this last revival are exceptionally interesting. Notably the assumption of Dorothy by Miss Decima Moore, an actress and singer of very unusual, if not unique, daintiness and humour, and unsparing energy. That Miss Moore should in some six little moons have broken through into the very front rank of favourites is the best proof of the gifts she possesses and the use to which she puts them; and her treatment of this familiar character of Dorothy indulges the hope that she adds originality to these valuable qualities. Miss Victor's reading of Mrs. Privett is another deservedly popular feature. Her quaintness is quite irresistible. Then Mr. William Elton spares neither voice nor muscle as Lurcher, and recalls the days when his whimsical burlesquerie at the Gaiety was the cleverest to be seen in London; and if Mr. Joseph Tapley has but few ideas on the subject of acting, and his geniality partakes of the awful nature of a schoolmaster's on breaking-up day, he has a very pretty light tenor voice, and knows how to turn it to musically account.

REVIVAL OF "HOODMAN BLIND" AT THE PRINCESS'S.

In the teeth of the author's protestations, fervent, loud, and deep—after Mr. Jones's wont—Mr. Rollo Balmain revived this workmanlike specimen of good, sound melodrama. Upon its reappearance on the 26th November, however, it was seen how much the play owed to the original actors. Minus their skill in making barren places appear verdant, and extracting abundance from fertile ground, the drama seemed unexpectedly conventional, Mr. Jones's fiery rhetoric sounded high-falutin', and the long arm of coincidence was seen to embrace the whole work in a disagreeably close grip. Still, considerable pleasure was to be had from the play, which abounds in clearly-drawn characters and dramatic situations of undeniable power. Of the original cast, which, in 1885, included Mr. Wilson Barrett as Jack Yeulett, Mr. Willard as the "heart-gnawing" villain Mark Lezzard, Mr. Hudson as the brutal gipsy Tom Lattiker, Miss Eastlake as both Nance the lily and languorous, and also the rosied and rapturous Jess, only one remains—Mr. George Barrett, the inimitable Ben Chibbles, blacksmith, philosopher, and friend to the needy and oppressed. But he is a host in himself, and no breezier or more genial assumption has there been than this of big-voiced, big-hearted, big Ben. Mr. Balmain was an impulsive hero—a hero who trod warily in his forerunner's footsteps; Mr. Bassett Roe's Willardian hatred was conveyed in meaning looks, but tones with little depth of feeling in them; Mr. Leonard Outram was an anything but aggressive gipsy; and Miss Sara Mignon, ill at ease as Nance, reached a notable level of pathetic reality during the closing scenes of Jess's sordid life. In spite of a capital setting and a creditable interpretation, the revival fulfilled Mr. Jones's gloomy predictions, and ran only for a week.

THE REVIVAL OF "AGATHA," RECHRISTENED "A SILENT BATTLE," AT THE CRITERION ON THURSDAY EVENING, 8TH DECEMBER, 1892.

Cheered by the minority, who noisily advertised imaginary merits when the piece was first played in May last, Mr. Wyndham got together as many as he could of his *matinée* company—a phenomenal cast—and again submitted Mr. Isaac Henderson's stagey, but undeniably effective play. It may almost be considered a revival in the interests of Miss Nethersole, for none gains honour and reputation but she. Indeed there is something almost uncanny in the spectacle of a cluster of "stars" of greater or less magnitude forming a glorious background for an actress comparatively little known to the public. The artistic self-sacrifice of Miss Winifred Emery, Miss Mary Moore, Miss Rose Leclercq, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Waring, and their attendant squires, Mr. Worthing, Mr. Aynsworth, and Mr. Somerset is, however, justified. Miss Nethersole's acting as a passion-driven woman, stayed on the brink of a moral precipice by terror at the news of peril to her child, is wonderfully vivid and moving, and her performance of this one scene is sufficient to awaken the liveliest anticipations of her future as an emotional actress of rare eloquence and power.





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MR. R. C. CARTON.

"Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate,
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate."

—Byron.

Notes of the Month.

IN one sense it may be said of the late Frederick Leslie with even less exaggeration than when applied to Garrick, that his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations. Garrick's audiences were, of course, confined to our shores, while not only will Mr. Leslie be sincerely regretted by innumerable play-goers in the metropolis and the provinces, but by hosts of admirers in Australia and America ; for "Fred Leslie" was almost as familiar a figure to audiences of Greater Britain as to our metropolitan ones, the exigencies of his calling compelling this popular actor to be something of a globe-trotter. We need not recapitulate here the list of his successes, as they are too well-known. A full and accurate account, too, is to be found in *THE THEATRE* for January, 1890. It is natural enough that as Mr. Leslie's later triumphs were connected with Gaiety extravaganza and (burlesque) the average play-goer, so given to hasty generalisation, should term Fred Leslie "a mere burlesque actor." Without venturing upon the wide question of the artistic value of burlesque *quâ* burlesque compared to other forms of art, it cannot be denied that to take the high rank in this branch of his art that Mr. Leslie did, demands abilities of no mean order. Even cultured critics, who are inclined to regard burlesque with intolerance, if not contempt, must admit that the supremacy of Leslie in burlesque was as undeniable as is that of Irving in tragedy, Toole in low comedy, or Beer-bohm Tree or George Alexander in—shall we say ?—"drawing-room melodrama."

IN versatility, originality, whimsical drollery, keen observation, and nice appreciation of humour, combined with a singularly sympathetic charm of voice and manner, no actor in the same line approached the artiste whose loss we mourn. But Mr. Leslie was something more than an original and gifted buffoon. Few who saw his graceful and sympathetic impersonation of Rip Van Winkle at the Comedy in 1882—no mere echo or burlesque imitation of Jefferson, but an original and highly-finished artistic performance—can help regretting that the imperious demand of the public for more entertainment in the style which they had found to their taste, should have prevented him from ever following his own personal inclination for high comedy. Frederick Leslie did much to purge burlesque and extravaganza of many of its objectionable features, and his quaint fancy, humorous conceits, and inexhaustible power of comic improvisation rendered what was formerly an unmeaning tissue of boisterous buffoonery and tedious travesty an amusing and artistic entertainment. His loss to us is well-nigh irreparable.

THE first of our portraits is that of Mr. R. C. Carton, the dramatist. Richard Claude Critchett—his true name—was born in London in 1853, and was educated in private. He is the first member of his family who has been connected with the stage, but was allowed to follow freely his strong innate proclivity for it, for which he was remarkable in his youth, and made his *debut* at the new

Theatre Royal at Bristol, on March 27, 1875, in the part of George de Laval in "The Sea of Ice." On June 19, of the same year, he made his first appearance in London, playing Osric at the Lyceum at the commencement of Mr. Irving's revival of "Hamlet." After a short absence to fill a provincial engagement, he resumed the part in the December following; and remaining at the Lyceum, played "Courtenay" in the first production of the late Lord Tennyson's "Queen Mary." In 1876 he played a round of Shakespearean characters in Liverpool, and accompanied Mr. Irving on his first provincial tour with "Hamlet." By 1877 Mr. Carton had taken an assured place in his profession, and was engaged to play Sir Benjamin Backbite in "The School for Scandal" at the Royal Aquarium Theatre. The next year he appeared at the Court in "New Men and Old Acres," and the next year made a hit as Johnny Fosbrooke in "Such is the Law," at the St. James's Hall. His next engagement was with Mr. Edgar Bruce, at the Criterion, whose parts he took during that gentleman's absences through illness in 1880. He afterwards filled a long engagement with Mr. Henderson, at the Globe and the Comedy. In 1884 he began to assist Mr. C. Raleigh in writing plays, though his name did not appear on the bills as a collaborator until the production of "The Great Pink Pearl," of which he was announced as joint-author. That play was so successful that Mr. Carton was encouraged to devote himself thenceforth entirely to play-writing—which occupation he had found very congenial—and accordingly severed his connection with the stage as an actor. He again collaborated with Mr. Raleigh in the authorship of a melodrama called "The Pointsman," in which Mr. Willard gained one of his earliest triumphs; and afterwards he made an attempt at farcical comedy with "The Treasure," again in collaboration, which, however, did not get beyond production at a *matinée*. Mr. Carton's next play was "Sunlight and Shadow," which is from his pen alone. In that play the success made by Mr. George Alexander, at the Avenue, will be remembered; and Mr. Carton has since "gone it alone" (in Californian card phraseology) in his plays. In addition to "Liberty Hall," with which Mr. Alexander seems about to score again heavily, another play by Mr. Carton is just about to be produced by Mr. Hare at the Garrick; and he has now taken a front place among the dramatists of the day. Mr. Carton is married to a daughter of the inimitable Compton, who is herself an actress of considerable achievement.

OUR second subject this month is a portrait group of the successful play, "Niobe," containing portraits of Miss Beatrice Lamb and Mr. Harry Paulton. A biography of Miss Lamb was given in our August, 1892, issue; and Mr. Harry Paulton is the well-known low-comedian, the erewhile favourite of Alhambra audiences. He was born at Wolverhampton in 1842, and made such a successful appearance there at some private theatricals, when he was about nineteen, that in 1865 he adopted the stage as a profession. His first experiences were gained in the provinces, where he became in a very short time an established favourite, so that in 1870 he was engaged to play the part of Blueskin in "The Idle Apprentice" at the Strand. He met with considerable success in London, at first in comedy parts, though later his name became so identified with successful low-comedy impersonations that it came almost as a complete surprise when last year he again appeared in a comedy part in "The Parvenu" at the Globe. Mr. Paulton was joint-author of the extra-

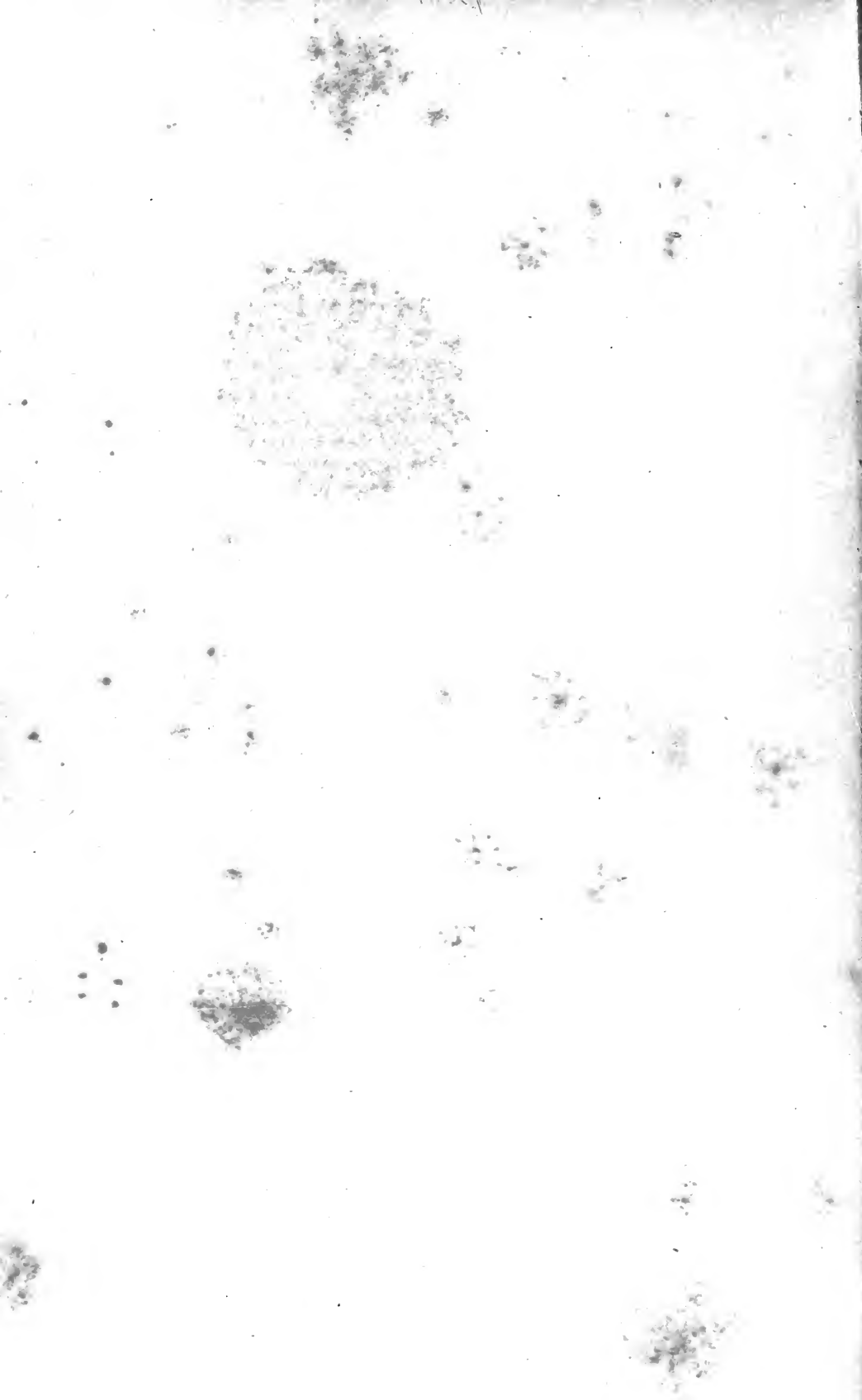


Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N.W.

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MISS BEATRICE LAMB AND MR. HARRY PAULTON.

IN GROUP FROM "NIOBE."



vaganza, "The Black Crook," in which his own acting at the Alhambra will be remembered, and also wrote a play called "Cymbria," which was produced at the Strand in 1883. The following year he wrote "The Babes ; or, W(h)ines from the Wood," in which Miss Alice Atherton made such a hit at Toole's, more than a hundred performances of the extravaganza being given. In 1885 Mr. Paulton again made a successful venture as a dramatic author, collaborating in the construction of the comic-opera "Erminie," which was received with much favour, and later, with his brother, in the production of "Niobe," now running at the Strand Theatre. His recent histrionic successes have been won in comedy parts.



New Plays

PRODUCED AND IMPORTANT REVIVALS in London, from November 19th to December 15th, 1892 :—

(*Revivals are marked thus °*)

- Nov. 19 "The Old Lady," comedy, in three acts, by C. Haddon Chambers. Criterion.
- „ 21° "The Romany's Revenge," drama, in four acts, by Wybert Clive. (First time in London.) Standard.
- „ 21° "A Sailor's Knot," drama, in four acts, by Henry Pettitt. Grand.
- „ 21° "Our Flat," farcical comedy, in three acts, by Mrs. Musgrave. Parkhurst.
- „ 21° "The World Against Her," drama, in four acts, by Frank Harvey. Lyric, Hammersmith.
- „ 26° "Hoodman Blind," drama, in four acts, by Henry Arthur Jones and Wilson Barrett. Princess's.
- „ 26° "Dorothy," comedy-opera, in three acts, by B. C. Stephenson, music by Alfred Cellier. Trafalgar Square.
- „ 28° "Arrah-na-Pogue," drama, in three acts, by Dion Boucicault. Surrey.
- „ 28 "Capital and Labour," drama, in four acts, by W. J. Patmore and Arthur B. Moss. Lyric, Hammersmith.
- „ 28° "It's Never Too Late to Mend," drama, in five acts, by Charles Reade. Pavilion.
- „ 28° "Lord Anerley," drama, in a prologue and three acts, by Mark Quinton and Henry Hamilton. Parkhurst.
- „ 28° "The Serious Family," Buckstone's comedy, in three acts. Novelty.
- „ 29 "From Gulf to Gulf," play, in four acts, by Henry John Smith. *Matinée*. Avenue.
- Dec. 3 "Liberty Hall," comedy, in four acts, by R. C. Carton. St. James's.
- „ 5 "To-Day," comedy, in three acts, by Charles H. E. Brookfield. Founded on Sardou's comedy, "Divorçons." Comedy.
- „ 5 "My Native Land," drama, in four acts, by William Manning. (First time in London.) Lyric, Hammersmith.
- „ 6 "The Almshouse," farcical comedy, in three acts, by William Lockhart and Loring Fernie. Parkhurst.
- „ 8 "Irmengarda," romantic opera, in two acts, composed by Emil Bach, Italian libretto by A. Zanardini, adapted from the German of P. Gisbert. Covent Garden.
- „ 8° "The Silent Battle" ("Agatha"), play, in three acts, by Isaac Henderson. (First evening performance.) Criterion.
- „ 8 "Uncle Mike," play, in four acts, by Florence Warden. Terry's.
- „ 9 "Widowers' Houses," play, in four acts, by G. Bernard Shaw. Royalty.

- Dec. 10 "All Abroad," farcical comedy, in three acts, by William Burnside. Parkhurst.
- " 10 "The Round Tower," tragedietta, in one act, by Justin Huntly McCarthy. Palace.
- " 10 "The Sleeper Awakened," choral ballet, in two tableaux, arranged by Sir Augustus Harris, words by Richard Henry. Palace.
- " 10 "From London to Paris," pantomime choral ballet, in five tableaux, written and arranged by Cecil Raleigh and Sir Augustus Harris, music by J. M. Glover and Gaston Serpette. Palace.
- " 12^o "The Silver Queen," drama, by Henry Arthur Jones. Celebration of Jubilee of the theatre. Marylebone.
- " 12^o "Confusion," farcical comedy, in three acts, by Joseph Derrick. Grand.
- " 15 "Crime and Justice," drama, in five acts, by Burford Delannoy and Norman Harvey. (First time in London.) Sadler's Wells.

In the Provinces, from November 15th to December 12th, 1892 :—

- Nov. 19 "The Bondman," drama, in five acts, by Hall Caine. T.R., Bolton.
- " 21 "The Player Queen," comedietta, in one act, adapted from the French, by W. Farren, jun. T.R., Bath.
- " 23 "Jumping at Conclusions," farce, in one act, by Alec Von Homrigh. Town Hall, Wandsworth.
- " 24 "The White Cockade," operetta, in one act, words by David Cook, music by Dr. McMillan. (Produced by amateurs.) St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow.
- " 26 "The String of Pearls," drama, in five acts, adapted for the stage from the novel of the same name, by C. A. Clarke and H. A. Silva. T.R., Birkenhead.
- " 28 "Spellbound," drama, in four acts, by Fenton Mackay. Stacey's, Sheffield.
- " 28 "Nipped in the Bud," musical farce, in one act, by J. Hewson, music by Victor Crampton. Aquarium, Brighton.
- " 29 "Haddon Hall," light opera, in three acts, libretto by Sydney Grundy, music by Sir Arthur Sullivan. T.R., Wolverhampton.
- " 30 "The Squire of Burleigh," opera, in two acts, by Fred. H. Seddon. (Produced by amateurs.) Hudson's Works, Bootle.
- " 30 "Pip's Patron," dramatic version of Charles Dickens' novel "Great Expectations," by W. J. Rix. Town Hall, Beccles.
- Dec. 2 "Prince Karatoff," play, in four acts, by Henry J. W. Dam. Prince of Wales's, Birmingham.
- " 8 "Moonshine," burlesque, in two acts, by J. H. Booth, music by Frank Swift. T.R., Hereford.
- " 8 "The Curio," comedy-drama, in one act, adapted from the French. Author unannounced. Pleasure Gardens, Folkestone.
- " 9 "A Knight of the Road," musical comedietta, in one act (author unannounced). T.R., Wolverhampton.
- " 10 "The Man in Possession," comedietta, in one act, by Robert Overton. Assembly Rooms, Leytonstone.
- " 12 "A Secret Crime," comedy-drama, in four acts, by Martin S. Dobson. Queen's, Birmingham.

In Paris, from November 6th to December 8th, 1892 :—

- Nov. 10 "Tel," comedy, in three acts, by M. Lelorrain. Vaudeville.
- " 10 "Une Vie Manquée," drama, in four acts, by Mme. Murcie. Bouffes-du-Nord.
- " 17 "Les Paroles Restent," comedy, in three acts, by Paul Hervieu. Vaudeville.
- " 29 "Les Fessiles," drama, in four acts, by François de Cural. Théâtre Libre.
- " 30 "Le Système Ribadier," comedy, in three acts, by Georges Feydeau and Maurice Hennequin. Palais Royal.
- Dec. 8 "Monsieur Conlisset," comedy-vaudeville, in three acts, by MM. Blum and Toché. Vaudeville.



THE THEATRE.

FEBRUARY, 1893.

On the Grinding of Certain Axes.



“WHAT is the greatest incentive to human effort?” asks the Social Philosopher, as he goes up and down the world gathering unripe data for his theoretic stew-pan. “There is but one—hunger,” replies the Political Economist, who drinks sherry-and-bitters daily to encourage a coy appetite. “Nonsense,” exclaims the half-pay Colonel, as thoughts of many a bygone sham fight cause the hot blood to course madly through his veins, “it is glory!” “Pardon me,” remarks the Philanthropist, who is paid secretary to innumerable public charities, “it is love of your fellow-creatures!” “No, no,” cries the Popular Preacher, who deems every appointment to a bishopric an egregious blunder; “it is the saving of their souls!”

The Philosopher is puzzled, for such a want of unanimity is confusing to the theory-grinder; but as he ponders over the problem, a wave of sanity passes over him—the occurrence is unusual and worth recording—and he determines to turn his back upon the specialists and consult the Average Man. That useful citizen has just dined, and is in that mood of vinous frankness which at a word lays bare the inner man. Moreover, he has just been improving his mind by the perusal in a Society Paper of an account of a Private View of the Academy. “Mr. So-and-So,” he learns, “was discussing with Mr. Somebody-Else the merits of Mr. So-and-So’s new play about to be produced at the Theatre Royal, Somewhere;” and “Mrs. So-and-So was gowned in lavender linsey-woolsey trimmed with *ruches* of pink alpaca, and looked charming.” These edifying details have much upset the Average Man, and a mighty impatience of obscurity is gnawing at his vitals. “Greatest incentive to human effort?” he cries, “to get out of the crowd, of course; to get talked about, written about, so that your photograph may be worth at least a shilling, and your autograph a penny stamp!” “Ah!” exclaims the Philosopher, “the truth at last; and, moreover, a grand discovery! The greatest incentive to human effort is the desire for

notoriety." So he proceeds to amplify the discovery into an octavo volume. And what though the truth it contains be only a truism ! He will serve it up in a new and palate-tickling fashion—for your modern philosophy is nothing if not popular—and the work will run into many editions !

And they who read it will be filled with a still mightier longing than before for Fame, with its attendant joys of the personal paragraph and the stare of curiosity in public places. To that end they will write books, go on the stage, aye, even commit murder ! But, alas ! their works will remain unread, their *matinées* will be damned, and their crimes, lacking that touch of imagination which leads to mystery or to circumstances of atrocity, will be recorded in a mere paragraph, and they themselves will be obscurely hanged.

For the Lady Fame and her illegitimate sister Notoriety—it may be assumed from their coyness that they are ladies—dwell within a Temple that is not easy of access. It is surrounded on all sides by a dense forest, and he that would penetrate to the sacred fane must, with his own trusty axe, make clear a pathway ; he himself must fell the trees and cut away the brushwood. It is true that when some slight progress has been made he may, in exchange for a like service, get a friendly hand to roll a log or two, but as a rule he must rely upon his own exertions. And as his axe must ever be keen as a razor, a good selection of grindstones should be his constant companions. There are grindstones of every pattern and adapted to every capacity, and the successful path-maker is he who chooses those most suitable to his own particular axe.

Now it is a matter of common knowledge that aspirants to Fame in the world of the Drama, be they actors, critics, or dramatists, are so absorbed in the cultivation of their own respective branches of the art theatrical as to be shockingly bad axe-grinders ; and it is possible therefore that a few hints on the science from an old hand may not be unwelcome.

Let us consider first the case of the Actor-manager, for he is of the great ones of the earth—the bright, particular star of the theatrical firmament. How can he best preserve his axe's edge in a condition of constant keenness ? Well, in the first place, he must cast aside that modesty so characteristic of the craft, and pose upon a theatrical pedestal of his own construction. Just as in society he is a little better than a duke, a little higher than an archbishop, so in the play, no matter what the part, he must "stand out"—even, if necessary, "from the picture," but in any case, stand out. For him the centre of the stage, for him the faithful flood of radiant lime-light ; the good lines must be all his, also the sympathetic parts. Above all things he must endeavour to convince the public that he is a great emotional actor. It may be true that when but a simple member of another's company Fate and his manager condemned him to a round of modern realistic characters—Italian assassins,

German financiers, and elderly dodderers of various nationalities ; showy parts, easy and effective, wherein a familiarity with foreign accent could effectually conceal monotony of method. But once a manager, it will be his bounden duty to throw aside the realistic for the romantic. There is an abundance of characters from which he can select ; mad fiddlers who lose their wives, modern dukes who lose their mistresses, and moody Danes whose mistresses lose them. And though the tones of his voice be Gregorian in their monotony, and his stock of gestures well-known and scanty, yet the mere importance of the parts shall ensure applause, and the first-night notices become a joy to his soul ; for is it not a canon of the critic's art that the man who plays a good part is a good actor ? Besides, his experience of character-studies will enable him to enrich his romantic impersonations with touches of modern realism, and the public, which adores the obvious, will regard these " new readings " as strokes of genius !

Then he must be careful to send to the leading reviews occasional articles on the Regeneration of the Drama and such like subjects—I use the word " send " advisedly, for the mere composition is a matter of detail ; his signature alone will add a lustre to the humblest penny-a-lining. Of course his portrait must appear in the Academy and the New, annually, if possible ; moreover—and this is the most important of all—he must so manipulate the public press that a cold in his honoured head shall cast a gloom over the community, and his absence from the bill become a national calamity.

These be wise counsels, O Actor-manager ; follow them, and thou shalt find thy axe's edge so keen that every obstacle in the road to Fame shall be but as corn before the sickle !

Next let me give a word of advice to that most exalted person, the Critic, who, as no one can deny, ranks next in the Dramatic world to the Actor-manager. Indeed, some authorities maintain that to him should be accorded the highest place of all, for does he not, say they, hold the contemporary Drama in the hollow of his hand, moulding it into this fashion or that, as the whim seizes him—the morbid or the common-place, the realistically dull, or the romantically posterous ?

Strange as it may seem now-a-days, there was once a time when the dramatic critic was a person of no importance. In those benighted days, his chief occupation was the chronicling of fires and the reporting of felonies ; noticing a new play was but an occasional artistic relaxation. Thank goodness, we have changed all that ! Unhappily, however, one relic of that barbarous period remains—that mantle of anonymity which is so irksome to the self-respecting critic, a mantle which must at once be rent asunder so that the critic's interesting personality may peer through the tattered garment. To do this effectually he must cast to the winds the old-fashioned notion that a first-night notice should be a mere *résumé* of the plot of the play, with a brief criticism of the acting, and a statement of its

reception at the hands of the audience. He must persuade his editor that this kind of composition is obsolete. What the public wants, he will urge, is half a column of interesting and amusing copy about something—anything—then why not about himself, the most interesting and amusing subject he is acquainted with? He must discard the editorial “we” for the axe-grinding “I,” and be chatty familiar and unconventional. He must seize his reader by the button-hole, as it were, slap him on the shoulders, dig him in the ribs as who should say “See what fine fellows we are, you and I! What a magnificent sense of humour is ours! I can make a joke, my boy—my gentle reader—and you can appreciate it!” Then he must never forget that the public will long to know what he has had for dinner, and how he digested it, and that any inane remarks of his neighbours in the stalls will be delightful reading. Of course he must be severely critical at times, with a preference for topics unconnected with the drama. But whatever the subject in hand may be, he must be careful to introduce allusions to as many authorities ancient and modern as he can manage to look up in the limited time allowed for composition—Lucretius, Peter the Great, Villon, Isaac Newton, Sophocles, Dr. Johnson and the author of “Goody Two Shoes.” If possible they should be made to glide in with easy gracefulness, but if not, let him drag them in by the head and shoulders; for although they may look a little broken-down and battered, their mere presence will be conclusive proof of the writer’s scholarship. There will naturally be no objection to the occasional introduction of some slight allusion to the play and the acting, but it should be in that form of graceful banter and good-natured toleration that clearly indicates the writer’s superiority over everyone concerned, be he actor, dramatist, scene-painter, gas-man, or check-taker. Or, by way of variety, he may simulate stupidity, and declare that he was totally unable to understand what the play was about. That style is invariably effective, and makes a most entertaining article. His readers see clearly that it is only his little joke, and so they roar with laughter and admire the funny dog. It is true that the notice may seriously affect the run of the play, but that is none of the critic’s business; for why should he be interested in other people’s grind-stones? The idea is absurd! No, let him go his own way, sharpening his own axe, ever keeping steadily before him one golden rule “Never scruple to sacrifice truth to an epigram and honesty to an apt quotation!”

And now, what advice can we give to the poor Dramatist? Axe-grinding is to him a tiresome and most laborious process, for the simple reason that the public does not care a straw who writes its plays. For although the words spoken on the stage are the children of his brain, the personality of the actors effectually conceals the author from the audience. Indeed there are hundreds of worthy citizens, who pay taxes with regularity, and cultivate the banjo with assiduity, who honestly believe that the actors invent the words of

the play "as they go along," And there is moreover a still larger class who imagine that every funny line spoken by the low comedian is a "gag" of his own invention, the author being responsible merely for the plot of the piece and those portions of the dialogue that unfold it, necessary but dull, so they applaud the comedian and curse the author.

Of course, if a dramatic author should happen to be a true genius, a man endowed by nature with wit, imagination and invention, and provided by personal experience with a perfect knowledge of the stage and its requirements, he will naturally give to the world great masterpieces; and although he may scorn every sort of axe-grinding, he will soon reach the Temple of Fame, for the unanimous verdict of the world will make clear his pathway. But we are not concerned with masters, we are dealing with the simple journeyman playwright who longs to be esteemed a master.

A worthy creature, as a rule, is this dramatic journeyman; well grounded in those elements of education which are placed by the State at the disposal of all, gifted with a certain modicum of talent, and provided with a sharp eye for any odds and ends of dramatic material that may be lying about. Now how can such an one provide himself with a few useful grind-stones? Let him attend, and he shall hear.

In the first place he must vie with the Actor-manager in the display of grave anxiety for the Regeneration of the Drama (indeed this Regeneration business deserves the close attention of all grinders, for it is most remunerative). He must take care to impress upon the public, in season or out of season, that he lives for Art alone (that blessed word "Art"! What would some of us do without it!) that he is the only genuine successor to Shakespeare—all others are spurious, and that he alone in these modern days is nature's own mirror holder. If after a flash or two the public does not find the reflection life-like, the public must be told that the fault is in itself and that it needs Art-education. So the journeyman must proceed to pour forth his soul into the Reviews, and lay bare his heart in the evening papers, in order that the public may learn that the elevation of the drama, and the success of his own plays are synonymous terms. His next step will be to lecture incessantly at Polytechnics, Toynbee Halls and other similar institutions, where flock the keen seekers after culture, on the proper receptive attitude of audiences towards masterpieces, or in other words, his own works. After all this careful preparation he must then proceed to shut himself up in his study (having taken care that the circumstance has been duly chronicled in the newspapers), and there evolve a great work. So soon as it is ready, he will inform the world at large that there is no manager in existence who can do justice to his masterpiece, and that he is consequently compelled to take a theatre of his own, and produce the play himself.

Well, the piece is produced, and the critics suspend for a time their

private judgment, and appear to be impressed. For is not the author, say they, our one literary play-wright, our only dramatic elevator! He himself has said it, and it must be true. And though they may yawn through the piece, yet when they come to write their notices, they will attribute this weariness to their own stupidity and so, for fear lest they stand confessed as dullards in the eyes of the world, they will declare that this new drama marks an epoch, and is in truth the play of the century. And what though the public treat it with respectful indifference? So much the better for the play-wright, for he can pose triumphantly as the cultivator of Art for Art's sake, and a reputation such as that will soon bring its own reward—an axe of remarkable keenness—and equipped with such an instrument he shall quickly penetrate to the Temple of Fame, and dwell therein—as a temporary lodger!

ROMANY.

The first of the new
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The Stage Book.



LET me hasten to explain. I do not mean the book of the play, nor do I refer to those numerous handbooks which enable the youthful aspirant to acquire the Art of Acting in twelve lessons.

The subject of my remarks is what is known as a property book. But again I may be misunderstood; the "property book" in stage parlance, I believe, contains a list of the necessary "properties."

Let me avoid the language of the stage, and employ English to make myself intelligible. The book to which I refer is the one which is carried on in the hand by the absorbed student, or is "discovered down front" on the couch on which the leading lady poses.

This book is a very old friend. My first remembrance of it is in "Money," in which play it is of invaluable service to Alfred Evelyn; in fact, on several occasions but for it he would have suffered much personal inconvenience, owing to his blunt personalities. As a youth, it was always a matter of enquiry with me why the explanation of, "The book, gentlemen," should have saved him a well-deserved castigation. But a quotation covers a multitude of sins; to the clergy, to whom the relieving language of ordinary hasty mortals is denied, it is more soothing than the Waverley pen, whilst it stamps the flippant conversationalist as a man of culture. But I digress; it is the outside of the platter with which I have to deal.

The book to which I refer is never read; or, if so, is read at the rate of about a page a second, which is scarcely fair to the book. From the contempt with which the actor turns over its pages, it might be a photographic album of theatrical stars.

It opens many a play. The comic servant is "discovered" reading it, if he is not dusting chairs. Directly "the star" is "heard off," the comic servant throws it on the table, and arranges himself flat against the wall just inside the door. Then the star makes his entrance (without taking the slightest notice of the servant), and having taken his attitude in the centre of the stage, waits with nodding head until the "reception" has been exhausted. Then he stalks to the table and seizes the book; we are on the tip-toe of expectancy; he is going to read us something. Not a bit of it! He turns over two or three pages, and not being able to find what he wants, he throws it on the table with a bang which makes you jump, should you happen not to be watching him. "What ho, varlet!"

he exclaims; "tell thy mistress that I would speak with her," &c., &c. I give this illustration as showing that from the opening the "property" book often plays an important part.

But it is to the villain that it is of such inestimable service. The stage villain's idea of the usages of Society is, to say the least, peculiar. He enters the drawing-room of the Duchess, and he brings his crush-hat with him! I have always found it impossible, myself, to elude the vigilance of the expectant cloak-room attendant; not so the villain. I believe if he wanted to enter the ball-room in an Inverness cape, he would be allowed to do so. Now note his demeanour. He stalks proudly through the assembled guests, who take no notice of him. It might be presumed that in such a gathering he would have one friend with whom he might exchange greeting; but no!—the assembled aristocrats either cannot or will not see him. They are arranged triangularly; one lady to two gentlemen. The Duchesses are much more at their ease than their partners, who seem to be painfully aware of the crinkled condition of the ducal trousers, and whose sole aim appears to be to avoid conversation, and to hide their nether limbs behind their duchesses. Then one of them upsets a content-less coffee cup, and the assembled aristocracy snigger. But of late Stage Society has been polished up to date, and now shakes hands on a level with its nose. But again I digress; let me keep to the book!

The villain, finding his hat in the way, deposits it in the centre of the drawing-room table or some such suitable spot, seats himself thereat, and seizes the book. Now if you or I were asked out for the evening, and directly we entered our host's drawing-room we took up a book and began to read, our manners would be commented upon. But the stage villain rises superior to custom. He makes rude remarks to the heroine (often the daughter of his host), and he shoots them at her over the top of the book, the while he languidly turns its pages with his black-stitched lavender-gloved fingers. If the heroine's virtue irritate him beyond control, he will either bang down the book or hurl it against the quivering walls of the ducal mansion. But the guests remain placidly unconcerned; he is the villain; and these little eccentricities are expected of him.

But the book is not the absolute property of the villain. I have even known the virtuous hero breathe his passion with his fingers between its leaves, as if he were not letter-perfect, and wanted the book for reference in case he found himself at a loss. And the heroine also makes use of it, not unfrequently. She walks through the streets of the town with her maiden eyes reverently bent upon its pages. She invariably walks in the middle of the road—there is no vehicular traffic. There are also no centre lamp-posts, or she would run into one. When the villain accosts her, she raises her deep-fringed, lamp-blackened eyes as much as to say "Did anyone speak?" But the heroine is kinder to the book than the villain; she not only pays it the compliment of reading it intently, but when she is

interrogated she hugs it close to her virgin bosom as though she would say to the villain, "Be as rude to me as you like ; heap insult upon insult on *me*, but nothing shall make me give up the book." The villain longs to get at it and dash it upon the ground, but so long as the heroine has it pressed against her heaving bosom, he is impotent. In fact, in every "line of business" the property book seems to inspire confidence. The righteously-indignant father sometimes holds it aloft while he hurls curses at the head of his erring daughter ; or the character-actor grunts or coughs behind it as an intimation that he is a political spy or emissary of the secret police.

The low comedian alone seems to have no use at all for the book. Perhaps he recognises that it is regarded as especially the property of the villain, and fears that his best wheezes would suffer from its association. He will have nothing to do with it ! Perhaps this antipathy can be explained. The Book (in its other sense) is a thing for which he has a great contempt ; the very suggestion of such a hindrance to his genius is to him irritating. No wonder then that he will not make "business" with the book ; he and it have nothing in common, and a bitter enmity divides them.

But he is the book's only enemy, and its place on the stage is as secure as the prompter's.

FRANK MORRIS.



Mrs. Kendal's Re-Appearance in London.



SINCE Mr. Irving set the fashion in 1883, what a constant stream of English players has been flowing States-wards ! Several of our actors have made their home there, such are Mr. E. J. Henley, Mr. Mansfield, and Mr. Coghlan ; many have gone over for special engagements, like Mr. Terriss, Mr. Forbes Robertson, and Mr. Conway ; while the list of English dramatic artists who have toured the States includes the names of the greater number of our leading players. Mr. Willard—absent for two years—talks of settling in New York. Mr. Barrett is now for the fourth time wooing the American public, while Mr. Irving and Miss Terry seek a Transatlantic welcome at the fall of the year. And our actresses have followed in the wake of our actors : Miss Ellen Terry, of course, accompanies Mr. Irving ; Mrs. Bernard Beere has lately been seeking American dollars ; while Mrs. Kendal has been delighting our cousins since the autumn of 1889. Perhaps the absence of Mr. Willard and Mrs. Kendal is that which has been most keenly felt. It seemed too bad that our Yankee friends should take from us almost simultaneously our two greatest emotional players.

We must be thankful, I suppose, that Mr. Irving and Mr. Tree still remain with us, and that Mrs. Kendal at length, after four years' absence, again treads the London boards. Certainly her departure left an unmistakeable void. Numerous claimants have been put forward to fill it, but no one seems likely to make good her pretensions. In fact, we may adopt Mr. Morley's words, and say with absolute truth, "There is no vacancy"—nor is there likely to be one while Mrs. Kendal lives. Miss Kate Rorke, great in "The Profligate," has been stationary since. Miss Winifred Emery, unsurpassable in imaginative work, is physically unfitted for such exacting rôles ; and putting aside Miss Janet Achurch, our most successful actress in this line of histrionics seems to be Miss Marion Terry. But there is a great difference between the St. James' of 1884 and the St. James' of 1893. Miss Marion Terry has obvious advantages denied to Mrs. Kendal. She is several years younger. She has a better succession of good parts, and she has a purer and less mannered style. Moreover, like her sister and Miss Rehan and Mrs. Beere, she has the grand manner, she knows how to walk, to glide on, to sweep the stage. The leading lady at the St. James' is obviously not yet in full possession of her powers. In "A Man's Shadow" she acted with power, in "The Idler" she was really great, but in "The Fan" she was not so successful. She was earnest—very earnest—in the duet

with Miss Emery, but she seemed to be oppressed by the St. James' restraint. At this crisis of her life Mrs. Erlynn should be distraught with agony for the fate of her daughter, and admirably as Miss Terry played this great scene, she did not quite realise, I think, the author's intentions. Every now and then as she swept round some genuine note of passion thrilled you, but as a whole the scene was under-played. Howbeit this is but necessary preface, let us now return to the subject of our article.

It was a particularly happy thought for the Kendal's to open their Avenue season with "A White Lie." London playgoers will scarcely recognise the piece now, so completely has its main scheme been altered. In 1889, when seen at the Court Theatre, Mr. Grundy's play was a not very convincing specimen of domestic drama. In its revised edition, the serious interest suppressed, the lachrymose parts of the piece deleted, and a fourth act added, the play forms one of the most brilliant and best acting comedies Mr. Grundy has ever written. The dialogue is crisp, bright, and natural, and sometimes epigrammatic; the situations are most mirth-provoking, and led up to in the true spirit of comedy; while the scene in the Inn in act iii. outdoes Sheridan's screen device—it is veritably a stroke of genius! Moreover, "A White Lie" possesses this indisputable excellence. It furnishes Mr. and Mrs. Kendal with absolutely the best light-comedy parts they have ever had. The play, of course, owes something to Sardou, but it is far superior to "Les Pattes de Mouche," and if it reminds one of "Still Waters," the resemblance is but superficial. I am afraid that in the above remarks I have trenched somewhat on the province of the able critic of "THE THEATRE." My heartiest apologies are due to him for the offence. My excuse must be that the play's production is somewhat in the nature of a revival. What a strange thing it is that Mrs. Kendal should have had to wait till she was forty-two before she could find a part really giving her great comedy powers full play. But had not Mr. Hare to wait till the second year of his third management before playing a really great and exhaustive part? And how curious a coincidence that it should have been reserved for the same brilliant dramatist to fit three really great players with great parts! Mr. Grundy has given Mr. Hare his Benjamin Goldfinch (and Sir Peter Lund), Mr. Tree his Abbé Dubois, and Mrs. Kendal her Kate Desmond.

"Undue domesticity," to quote a late utterance of Mr. Tree, is perhaps to be imputed to Mr. and Mrs. Kendal. Speaking for myself, however, I have no objection to offer to this; I don't see why two such gifted players as Mr. and Mrs. Kendal should not act together. But this leads to Mr. Kendal being overshadowed; in England at least it has delayed public recognition of his just claims to high work in his profession. True the actor has not always been fitted with the most suitable parts. It is in light comedy that he is seen at his best. In "The Money Spinner,"

in "Impulse," in "Still Waters," and "A White Lie" Mr. Kendal is as delightful as John Drew, as quietly effective as Charles Hawtrey. Nor is he lacking in more serious parts. In "The Ironmaster" and in "The Wife's Sacrifice," and now and then in "Clancarty," he acts with soundness and genuine power. But for the romantic drama and for strongly emotional work the actor is but ill-suited.

As the Kendals are only playing a six months' season in London this year—and that only preparatory to another American tour—it seems a great pity that they should devote any time "A White Lie" may leave them to revivals of such well-worn pieces as "Impulse," "A Scrap of Paper," and "The Ironmaster." Surely any Londoner who takes the least interest in theatricals must have ere now seen Mrs. Kendal's Susan Hartley! Surely "Impulse" has been played often enough in London! Everybody must have seen Mrs. Kendal as Mrs. Beresford! And is Stephenson's piece really worthy of revival? More may be said for the expediency of reviving "The Ironmaster." Mrs. Kendal is great as Claire; but is she not a trifle too matronly now for Ohnet's heroine? In addition to these revivals of old successes we are promised "Prince Karatoff"—a new play by Mr. Dam. The piece is presumably a better play than "Diamond Dene," but however favourable a specimen of drawing-room melodrama it may be, it is obviously inferior to other plays in the Kendal *repertoire*, and is evidently intended mainly for exploitation in America. Now why should not we have a revival of some of Mr. Pinero's plays? "The Hobby Horse," "The Money Spinner," "The Weaker Sex," and, if possible, "The Wife's Secret," would be very welcome reproductions. True, the latter piece ran but three weeks when produced at the St. James' in 1888. Its reception might, however, be more favourable now. At any rate, it gives Mrs. Kendal superb opportunities in the part of Lady Eveline. Certainly a revival of "The Money Spinner" seems due. It has not been seen in London since 1885, and though John Clayton and John Hare are no longer available for their old parts, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal are at hand, and theirs are the most prominent *roles*. As for "The Hobby Horse," Mr. Pinero's agreeable comedy has not perhaps achieved its due success. It ran for some 120 nights in 1886 and 1887, but there seems no reason why it should not have rivalled "The Magistrate" and "Dandy Dick." In any case a revival would be very opportune now, and would enable us to renew acquaintance with Mrs. Kendal's Mrs. Jermyn—one of the great actress's most delightful creations in comedy. Mr. Kendal, I suppose—in any contemplated revival—would play Mr. Hare's old part, and leave the Rev. Noel to some other actor. But the strangest omission from the list of proposed reproductions is that of "The Weaker Sex." Here is one of Mr. Pinero's best-written and strongest serious plays—a piece produced too during the same season as that in which "A White Lie" first saw the light; and yet the one is taken and the other left. Moreover, in the whole of Mrs. Kendal's

répertoire there is no part in which she is seen to more advantage than in her impersonation of Lady Vivash. In "The Ironmaster" and in "The Squire" she is great, but great despite the fact of her physical unsuitability to the parts. In "The Weaker Sex" she plays the part of a mature woman. Not only has the gifted actress the fullest opportunities here for the display of her powers, she has the advantage also of looking the part. There is no physical inequality—no disillusionment.

Early in these pages I have had to contrast Mrs. Kendal's powers with those of Mr. Alexander's leading lady, and naturally I have found Miss Marion Terry somewhat wanting. But in the "Fan" there was one phase of Mrs. Erlynne's character that was portrayed with great subtlety. Lacking Miss Terry may have been in her presentation of Mrs. Erlynne, the mother, but she played with admirable subtlety Mrs. Erlynne, the cynical and resourceful *demi-mondaine*. Now Mrs. Kendal could never have done this; for she either will not or cannot enact any but the most virtuous women. She may be spotlessly innocent, she may be flighty, she may be imprudent, but Mrs. Kendal must never be vicious on the stage. To use an expressive phrase, she simply "funks the part" of a bad woman. Here she rarely attempts to vie with her great rival Mrs. Beere. You remember the production of a version of Sardou's "Maison Neuve" in 1885 at the St. James'. Pinero was the adapter, and called his piece "Mayfair." (Grundy, by-the-way, has called a version he made "A House of Cards.") Well, Sardou's piece did not improve under Mr. Pinero's process of expurgation and adaptation, and what with the Frenchiness of the plot and Mrs. Kendal's nerveless and hesitating grasp of her character, the play failed to attract after about fifty nights. In fact I cannot help thinking with Mr. Knight that "In moral squeamishness is found the limitation of Mrs. Kendal's art." Still, to give the lady her due, she seems to have resolved to atone for all her sins in this respect, for lately in Dublin she played the most "awfully wicked" woman. It was in one of Mr. Clyde Fitch's plays—a drama called "Marriage in 1892." The consequences of Mrs. Kendal's audacity were disastrous. I have always understood that Irish women are chaste, but Irish men and Irish journalists seem most outrageously chaste—most Puritanically moral! Mr. Clement Scott and Mr. Alfred Watson, writing on "Ghosts," were not more vituperative, not more Philistine than the Dublin papers in their notices of Mr. Fitch's play. Alas for poor weak human nature! I cherish a wish to see the play. I positively yearn to see Mrs. Kendal figuring as an unfaithful wife: another man's mistress, a painted charmer, and nobody knows what else. But I am afraid that I am doomed to disappointment. For though the Kendals played "Marriage in 1892" in Glasgow, they seem to have dropped it since like a hot cinder. And now let me in a few words dwell on one or two jarring notes in Mrs. Kendal's stage methods. One circumstance that

detracts from perfect enjoyment of her art is the lady's restless use of business—her refusal to economise her resources. In "A White Lie" the stage business is marvellous, for Mr. Grundy, true to his belief that stage literature is supplied in equal measure by playwright and player, has left numerous gaps for the actors to fill up. All through the wonderful first act Mrs. Kendal's business is most delightful, and baffles description. Sometimes, however, in the later acts, it loses some of its significance by effusiveness. At the end of act ii. Mr. Kendal goes through quite a scene of mingled business and pantomime in lighting his cigar, putting on his hat and cloak, and taking up his cane. This is all very well, and very welcome; but there is a mean between economy and prodigality of by-play, and the Kendals seem, since their visits to America, sometimes to overstep due limits. And again, several awkward tricks of Mrs. Kendal are apt to militate against perfect illusion. Notice, for instance, the way in which the actress preludes and gives due notice of an effective emotional display. This is an old failing of Mrs. Kendal, and one which she seems never to have entirely got rid of. Another mannerism is a more pardonable error, and comes naturally to an actress of such great gifts as Mrs. Kendal possesses. Frequently she seems to hesitate and not to know how she means to play a given scene. This is not from any lack of power or lack of study—rather has it its origin in excessive study and exuberance of resources. Mrs. Kendal wants to disclose the full measure of her powers, to show all the different ways at once in which the scene might be taken. Now it is perfectly allowable for a player to change his or her business and to vary the reading of a character, but this strange uncertain touch, this desire to display mere virtuosity is to be deprecated as an artistic blunder. A truce to cavillings, however! Every actress has her faults; why not Mrs. Kendal? These are but spots on the sun—blemishes which need not seriously affect our high estimate of the actress's genius. We must be thankful that Mrs. Kendal is still spared to us—that for seventeen years she has maintained her supremacy in English dramatic art. "We are all proud of her"; and while she remains on the English stage we can say with Mr. William Archer, "We have one great actress—Mrs. Kendal."

W. A. LEWIS BETTANY.



Wife Jennie.



FORTY long years ago, Jennie,
Forty long years to-day,
The parson finished what Love began
In the little church down the way ;
'Twas the dawn of comfort for me, Jennie,
The dawn of trouble for you,
For, through sorrow and joy you've always prov'd,
The braver heart of the two.

Ay, the *husband* you always were, Jennie,
The household's band and stay,
But ever the woman pure and sweet,
The same as you are to-day.
Wealth never made you vain, Jennie,
Nor poverty made you poor—
O, an angel enter'd my humble home
The day you passed through its door!

Children five grew round us, Jennie,
(Love, coax back that growing tear),
One found a grave 'neath the stormy wave,
And one had a soldier's bier,
And two in our quiet churchyard sleep,
The last nestles on your breast ;
Kiss him for all the rest, Jennie,
Kiss him for all the rest !

When the Lord seemed to forsake us,
'Twas then that you prais'd Him most,
When my weak heart gave in to trouble,
'Twas then you became a host.
God's blessing smiles from your eyes, Jennie,
Through you he has gladden'd my life—
O, blessings upon His name, Jennie,
For giving me you for wife !

H. V



An Interesting Proposal.



R. JEFFERSON said that if I would promise never to reveal his name, nor the name of the lady (it was Ashton), nor where they came from, nor where he and I were when he related the story to me, he could supply me with a very quaint piece of literary matter for what he called my "books." I think he was incited to make me this offer by the fact that a little officer, on leave from Algiers, was always narrating romantic experiences to me, and to Madame — at the head of the boarding-house table ; and begging me to take note of them. He pressed his offer so cunningly, as we sat in the cool veranda overlooking the garden—just one glimpse of sparkling Paris showing betwixt the horse-chestnuts—that he aroused at length my vivid curiosity, and I prepared eagerly to listen to his narration. But then he began carefully to think out plans to ensure my secrecy. "But there"—he suddenly broke off (the word was "thar," as Mr. Jefferson pronounced it) "you could not keep a secret if you tried to ; no woman can ! You'll let it all out in the first paragraph !"

"Some years ago," said Mr. Jefferson, "when I was a good-looking young man, I was practising as a surgeon in a big city, somewhere in the length and breadth of the United States of America. I shan't tell you any closer particulars, and then you won't suffer the temptation of repeating what I don't want known. Well, I had a patient or two to begin with ; but they dropped off in the most unfortunate way. What's that ?—No, they did *not* die, whatsoever you may suppose. If you interrupt like this, I shall never get along ; and recollect it is an embarrassing story. At the time I want to talk about, affairs were at a very low ebb for me, looking very black, I can tell you. One November evening I sat brooding over them alone, with my boarding-house bill unpaid for two weeks past, and very little prospect of any money coming in. I had one rather influential friend in the city, who, when I first arrived, had promised to do great things for me ; but he was a busy man, and I felt no grudge towards him that he had so soon forgotten me. Well, I was startled just then by the opening of the door, and the same second was on my feet very much flurried. There was a telegram for me. I tore it open, and then stood staring at the words—reading them over and over again ; as though they formed an extract from some newly inspired Decalogue, or were written in a language I did not quite understand. And then—then I threw myself into an arm-chair once

more, and prepared to brood more bitterly than ever. I know you have not heard yet what the telegram was about. I should have thought any writer knew that an important point like that deserved to be worked up to a sort of climax. It was dated from an hotel in a city some hundreds of miles north, was headed "Business," and ran as follows: 'Sir, pardon my telegraphing to enquire whether you can be so good as to marry me.'

"No, I had not encouraged any girl to think I wished to marry her, and—and, yes—that was more like it. It was a hoax you say, and that was what I said to myself as I sat down again. But I could not think who on earth could have been at the trouble to perpetrate it. I knew nobody in the city from which the telegram came, and had never been there; still, that seemed the only solution of the mystery. Suddenly I remembered a man Bradmore, who had crossed the Atlantic from Liverpool about the time I did, and who was very much given to this sort of thing. I forthwith jumped to the conclusion the telegram was from him. I don't know what possessed me; it seemed a senseless trick, even for Bradmore to have played, and did not chime in very happily with the state of my spirits just then; but a sudden fit of devilry, I suppose, made me break into one of my last dollars to send off this reply:—

'To Business—

'With the greatest possible pleasure.—JEFFERSON.'

"It was not until after I had sent it that I recollected, with rather a peculiar sensation, that this was Leap Year.

"Well, I had a couple of new patients on the morrow, and for the next few days was kept tolerably busy. By the end of that week I had very nearly forgotten about the telegram. One afternoon I came in just as it was getting dark, and I saw a letter with a handsome monogram, addressed to me, and opened it in a hurry, thinking some wealthy patient was to be mine. It ran something like this—

'Dear Sir,—I have been expecting to hear from you every day since receiving your telegram, for the prompt despatch of which as also for your very kind acquiescence to my proposal I beg to thank you. I returned from —ville yesterday, and shall be glad to see you as early as possible at 550, Washington Avenue.

'Yours sincerely,

'MARY M. ASHTON.'

"Now, when you have quite finished laughing at me, I can go on to tell you a little more. I could not call that telegram a hoax any longer. I had never been inside No. 550, Washington Avenue, but I knew the house, as everybody else in that city did—a monster edifice as big as twenty ordinary houses; and as for the Ashtons, they were noted throughout the length and breadth of the States alike for their wealth and their eccentricity. I could not any longer consider the telegram a hoax, and in spite of my better judgment was obliged to come to the conclusion that one of the Misses Ashton (I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror just then, and saw that I was

blushing as red as the curtains) had fallen in love with my humble self, and this being Leap Year, had proposed to me.

"It was, it was indeed, as you say, extremely good of her; that struck me right away. I did not to my knowledge so much as even know anyone who was personally acquainted with any of the Misses Ashton, but I recollected a bevy of handsome Spanish-looking girls one night in a box at the theatre, being identified by somebody beside me as the rich Ashtons, of Washington Avenue. Of course, don't think I did not try to explain away, in a more likely manner, the mystery of the telegram and the letter. Admitting that I was a good-looking young fellow, and an Englishman (which might count for something) and that I was poor as a church rat and she rich as Croesus, I still quite saw, as you do now, the improbability of Miss Ashton's telegraphing to propose to me; but that she *had* done so, there was her letter to vouch for. And as I sat trying to steady my whirling brain, and think consecutively, it seemed to grow not more but less unlikely. Mr. and Mrs. Ashton, senior, I knew to be dead. A daughter-in-law now reigned supreme at Washington Avenue, and the pretty sisters—I had picked this up from society notices in the newspapers—lived with her. It was easy to understand that under the circumstances they should wish to marry, and they were rich enough, in all conscience, to marry whom they pleased. And then besides, over and above all these considerations, was this not Leap Year? To be sure, it was astonishing Miss Mary M. Ashton did not pursue some other course. Having seen me and fancied my personal appearance (whether on that occasion at the theatre or not, I could not say) one would have thought she might have considered it necessary to form my acquaintance before proceeding to the step which she in her letter alluded to so calmly. But it was possible she had made enquiries which rendered such a conventionality in her opinion superfluous. Why should she not in the first instance write, you say. Why telegraph? Yes, well I could not explain that to myself except by supposing her to be in the—in a very great hurry, and most complimentary to me it seemed—I assure you I soon felt quite sentimental about it—that she should. It struck me that perhaps it had come to her ears in some odd roundabout way, whilst at —ville, that I contemplated going back at once to England, which in point of fact I did. Oh, so I should never have given credence to these wild conclusions unless I had allowed myself to get very much excited, you say. Well, of course, I was excited. It was my first proposal, and I should have thought anyone who had read a little, let alone written some, would know everybody gets excited at such a time as that.

Now don't you forget that I was a very young man indeed, and laugh at me too much when I tell you that I hardly got a wink of sleep that night. Once convinced that this proposal was genuine, the affair assumed for me a most serious aspect. Miss Ashton—the wording of the letter, the fact of the proposal itself

proved it—considered herself vastly my superior in social position. Here was food for thought as touching our happiness in the years to come. Then, she was in all probability, I decided, considerably older than myself. Lastly, when all allowances were made, what an extraordinary young woman she must be. But weighing in my mind against these objections there was, of course, her money. “I shall be lifted out of the mire of poverty,” I told myself, “into celestial regions, far beyond my wildest dreams of bliss.” Growing quite poetical, was I? Perhaps. But I must not forget to tell you that I was prosaic enough to wonder a great deal about what you have not so far questioned me upon. It seemed the most extraordinary part of the whole matter that Miss Ashton should simply have headed her telegram “Business,” and yet evidently, as her letter proved, expect me to be perfectly clear as to who sent it. I came to the conclusion that Miss Ashton must either be labouring under some most mistaken idea as to my having paid her attentions (what will a woman not fancy, after all—as you say, of course—especially where I am concerned) or, failing this, it might be that the omission of the name was a simple slip.

Oh, yes, I know you think you never would have been deceived in such a way, but perhaps you will allow it was no wonder I felt a bit queer when a carriage dashed up to the door next morning, and I saw a young lady get out, and heard a remarkably sweet voice enquire whether Mr. Jefferson happened to be in. Two minutes later she was shown into a room where I was sitting alone. I returned her perfectly composed bow in a heartrendingly awkward manner, but did manage somehow to ask her to be seated. She was not one of the Spanish-looking sisters, but a hundred times prettier than they—blue-eyed, golden-haired, pale as a lily, and young as Hebe. (Take care, you had your footstool within an ace of toppling over the edge of the veranda then).

“I thought you might have found it convenient to call before now,” she remarked, “but not hearing from you, and being in a hurry to get this matter put on a more satisfactory footing, I ventured to take the initiative. I hope you do not mind!”

There was the same touch of hauteur in her manner which had wounded my *amour-propre* in her note, and I regained some little show of composure.

“It is altogether too good of you, madam, to take the initiative now, as also at the commencement of the matter which you wish to see put on a more satisfactory footing.”

I was conscious of a flash of pride at this masterpiece of sarcasm; but she took it very coolly.

“Oh, at the commencement!” echoed she indifferently, “Well, naturally I had to. You could hardly have done so.” I think some consciousness of the stupour to which these words reduced me pierced her, for she pursued hastily, “I mean, not knowing of my inclinations and my decision. But to proceed to business! I sup-

pose we cannot altogether escape the lawyers, can we? There will be no end of legal papers to draw up, documents to sign and so forth; all, I daresay, for very little rational use. Is there no means of getting rid of all that superfluous red-tapeism?"

"Madam," said I very sternly, whilst the beads of perspiration started out on my forehead, "there is no possible way of going further into this matter without a distinct idea as to the documents." In these few moments I felt as if I had aged some years. I should be as hard and calculating as she was, I told myself. She had taken a fancy to me, and she should pay for her fancy! We would see about the "rational" use of those documents!

I thought she regarded me, as I said this, with somewhat increased respect, an expression of disappointment which had seemed gradually dawning on her beautiful face, now disappeared.

"I suppose you are right," she replied thoughtfully. "We might interview a lawyer to-morrow. I have no doubt you have a much better knowledge than I have of the best way to go about this business. But a lawyer will put everything into proper shape. By-the-way, have you considered at all about the plan of the house?"

She was as cool as though she were marrying *me* for my millions, and she and I both cognisant of the fact. There she sat, looking up at me out of great innocent azure eyes, the most charming woman I had ever beheld (do you really feel like tumbling that stool into the garden, it's going!), and asked me in a calm voice if I had considered the plan of the house.

"No, madam, I have not considered it," I replied, with a vehemence which seemed to surprise her.

"Well, I have," pursued she. "I even drew a rough sketch of the building, as I have for some time had it in my mind's eye. But, Mr. Jefferson," she suddenly paused, a trace of embarrassment for the first time in her voice, a faint flush creeping into her cheek, "perhaps I have been rather precipitate, not ceremonious enough in the way I have approached you. You are sure you do not wish to give this up?"

What could I reply to such words, and from such an angel of beauty? (There goes the footstool, at last!) My change of mood was rapid as hers. I stammered something about eternal constancy, neither heaven nor earth would move me! What was I, that she—"in the pride of her beauty," should stoop to me! I noticed that she became very white, and put it down to repressed passion—perhaps regretting a little such admirable self-control—but I felt slightly wounded that she glanced towards the bell as if to make sure of its existence; and she need not have stared in such a scared way at the big black bottle—for it was only ink—on the table beside me.

"Thank you," said she rather faintly, when I paused, and rose as she spoke, "It may be better, perhaps, to talk over all this more fully another time." She paused—"Now I see you more closely," pursued she hesitatingly, "you look tired. I have heard so much of your

cleverness and—and your excellent character, it is certainly only—I mean—I mean that you are tired. You have been overworking yourself. No, I really must not trouble you further to-day ! Call on me to-morrow ! But once we get this all arranged, you must never overwork yourself again. Of course you will have your separate suite of apartments and—Mr. Jefferson, you are certainly unwell. Let me call someone.”

She left me, and before I could recover myself sufficiently to follow her, or to do anything but stand wandering, whether I were really and truly myself, John Jefferson, at all, I heard voices on the stairs, and an instant later the man to whom I alluded at the outset as being influential but busy—who at the beginning of my career in this city had befriended me—this man came rushing in.

“You are ill, Jefferson ?” he cried. As I made a gesture of dissent he went on more calmly, “Sit down—only a momentary faintness, I suppose. She seemed so very much alarmed.”

“She,” echoed I hoarsely, “to whom do you allude ?”

“What—oh, to Mrs. Ashton, of course,” he answered seating himself. “Rather odd meeting her in the doorway, was it not ? You are sure you feel all right again ? By-the-way, I owe you an apology, old man. Mrs. Ashton came to me quite full of this new scheme of hers the other week when we happened to be staying at the same hotel at —ville, and begged me to recommend somebody for the post ; so, of course, I recommended you, and promised to write to you at once. But I left for home that day, and quite forgot. What a guilty wretch I felt this morning when I met her husband, and my promise came flashing back to my recollection ; but he told me she telegraphed to you from —ville, after her patience became quite exhausted, and that you answered at once in the affirmative, and seemed to understand all about it. ‘Who is Mrs. Ashton ! What post !’ Why my dear fellow you need not shout so. Mrs. Ashton is the wife—of course you know so much—of the late millionaire’s son, and as for the post, she must have told you all about that proposed cottage hospital of hers far better than I can—though to be sure her husband declares the scheme will finish by going to her brain. Oh, is that the telegram she sent you. Hum-headed “Business.” How amusing woman are, the very best of them, when they have any business real or imaginary on hand—‘Sir, pardon my telegraphing to enquire whether you can be so good—he broke off abruptly. “Why, really, Jefferson, if one were not acquainted with those vagaries of woman-kind, one would read this not—‘whether you can be so good—Ashton, Mary M.’—but ‘whether you can be so good as to marry me.’ Well, the more I look at it—it does read ‘so good as to marry me.’ Ha, ha—eh ! What now ? And you *did* think that—ha, ha, ha ! And this Leap Year, too—”

* * * * *

“And if you promise faithfully to conceal everything about Mrs.

Ashton and me," pursued Mr. Jefferson gloomily, "you may make some use of this. Did the story get out, then? To be sure it did! Of course, I don't want to say too much about that, she listened so patiently to me, as I have pointed out to you; even when I talked nonsense in my excitement, she did not dream of getting irritated and pushing her footstool away or anything. She did not look as though anything on earth could ever induce her to tumble a footstool out of a veranda just because somebody had got talking about something she did not care to hear. But, of course, as I tell you, I never knew a woman yet who could keep a secret. Oh, no, it was not that friend of mine, it was she who managed somehow or other to get hold of the true explanation of my confusion, and told the story, of course, in confidence. The next day the newspapers had it, and in a week the whole State laughed. Certainly I came away on that account, but as it happened, it was all this that brought me the greatest stroke of good fortune imaginable. However, I don't mean to tell you that just now. I shall wait until I see what the little man from Algiers has been concocting to amuse you with this evening, and then, perhaps, I may follow suit. But see here now, I must have a look of the first paragraph you put down as to what I have been telling you, before you work out the rest. Recollect that!

S.



Some London Theatres of the Past.

I.—THE FORTUNE THEATRE.



HIS theatre stood between Golden Lane and Whitecross Street. By a contract, dated January 8, 1599, Henslowe and Alleyn (actors) agreed with Peter Street, a carpenter, for the "erectinge, buildinge and setting-up of a new house and stage for a playhouse." As the intended building was not specified by any name in the contract, it seems probable that this was the first theatre built on this spot. The cost of erection was £520. According to the contract it was to be three stories high, and to comprise "fower convenient divisions for gentlemen's roomes, and other sufficient and convenient divisions for twopennie roomes with necessarie seates to be placed and sett as well in those roomes as throughoute all the rest of the galleries of the said house," and to have "divisions withoute and within." The "gentlemen's roomes" were the boxes, and the "twopennie roomes" what might be called slips. The area, or "yard" (now stalls and pit) seems to have been an open space, filled promiscuously by the crowd. In "Nobody and Somebody" (1601) reference is made to this yard—

"Somebody once pickt a pocket in this playhouse yard,
Was hoysted on the stage, and sham'd about it."

Mention is also made of this portion of the auditory in the prologue to "The Hog hath lost his Pearl," performed by the London apprentices—

"We are not halfe so skill'd as strowling players,
Who couldn't please here as at country fairs ;
We may be pelted off, for ought we know,
With apples, eggs, or *stones* from thence *below* ;
In which weelee crave your friendship, if we may,
And you shall have a dance worth all the play."

The Fortune was opened by Alleyn, with the Lord Admiral's (Nottingham) servants, who had previously performed at the Rose, and who, in 1603, changed their patron for the gallant Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales. The house has been described as a "vast theatre," and was certainly a favourite with the public for many years. In "Albumayar" (a play produced at Cambridge in 1614), Trinculo says : "I will confound her with compliments, drawn from the plays I see at the Fortune and Red Bull, where I learn all the words I speak, and understand not." John Meton again, in his "Astrologaster, or the Figure Caster" (1620), thus refers to the performance of

"The History of Doctor Faustus" at this theatre: "Another will foretell lightning and thunder that shall happen such a day, when there are no such inflammation scene except a man go to the Fortune in Golden Lane, to see the tragedie of 'Doctor Faustus.' There indeede a man may behold shaggy-haired devils run roaring over the stage with squibs in their mouths, while drummers make thunder in the tyring-house, and the twelvepennie hirelings make artificial lightning in their heavens."

At this period fireworks, the firing off of chambers, and the clamour of fighting were introduced into almost every theatrical production. This custom was often preserved by attaching crackers to the slops of the clown, although having no bearing upon the play, or incidental thereto. It fell into disuse, however, about 1620, when an attempt was made to reform the stage. Reference is made to the omission of fireworks in the prologue to "The Two Merry Milkmaids," in which the author prays for your own good, you in the yard will lend ears, in order to well understand, and relate, on returning home,—

"Tis a fine play,
For we have in't a conjuror, a devill,
And a clown, too. But I fear the evill
In which—perhaps unwisely—we may fail
Of wanting squibs and crackers at their tail."

The Fortune took fire at midnight on December 9, 1621, being entirely destroyed. As it was a popular house, however, and not overburdened with the encumbrances attaching to modern theatres, it was soon rebuilt on an extended scale, and described as "a large round brick building, with the figure of Fortune in the front."

The new house was opened by the Palsgrave's servants, who continued to perform here until 1640, when they removed to the Red Bull. This company was succeeded by the Prince's, who contrived to act occasionally notwithstanding the Order made by Parliament (July, 1647), for suppressing plays and playhouses; nor did they actually desist until the issue of the peremptory Ordinance of February 13th, 1648, for dismantling playhouses.

As a result of these difficulties, the rent of the theatre fell into arrear, and the Trustees of Dulwich College took possession on November 21st, 1649, the house having been devised to this charity by the will of Alleyn.

In February, 1661, the site and ground adjoining were publicly advertised to be let for building purposes, and that "twenty-three tenements might be erected, with gardens." This scheme, however, did not succeed, and when the Archbishop visited it in 1667, a representation was made to him "that the College had been brought into debt considerably by the falling in of the tenancy."

This theatre was generally noticed in the Press as the old playhouse in Redcross Street, and, being used for a secret conventicle, was visited by the Officers of Justice, in the attempt to suppress those meetings, as late as November, 1682. It then had avenues to both

Redcross Street and Whitecross Street—a circumstance that, in several instances at least, enabled the preachers to escape from their pursuers.

Writers of the Stage's history are silent as to the ultimate fate of the Fortune, but a City antiquarian believes the site was purchased of the Trustees of Dulwich College by one of the City Companies. However this may be, there is no record of a theatrical performance taking place after the issue of the above-mentioned Ordinance in 1648.

W. S.



Query ?



HOUGH hope is dead, as the fall of your feet
 On the grass that withered a month ago ;
 And the hours have draggled their pinions fleet
 In the bitter bath of the waters of woe ;
 Will you think, or dream, or hear of it ever,
 That the sin you sinned was being so sweet ?

If the ghosts of your smiles, and the words that you said
 Rose up in the dusk of a winter day,
 And you saw the track of the feet that you led
 On the path where your eyes had beacon'd the way—
 Could you never guess, nor imagine ever,
 Who was the slave of a hair of your head ?

Now the leaves, and the sun and the shade depart,
 And the frighten'd birds, that haste to the South,
 Cry one to another, and gather, and start.
 If one should carry a word in his mouth
 Across the lands and waters that sever,
 Would your heart beat quicker ?—But, have you a heart ?

G. Y.



The Theatrical Menu at the Chicago Exhibition.



It is with unspeakable regret that I inform THE THEATRE readers that English play-goers will be disappointed if they expect to see, whilst attending the Exhibition, a representation of indigenous Dramatic Art. Chicago, now New York's aggressive and dangerous rival in everything—there are here the chief orchestra of the country, three magnificent public libraries, Conservatories innumerable, and an art institute, whose present quarters are too restricted, and for which a splendid fane is now building—excepting the drama, has no home for the maintenance and encouragement of dramaturgy. There are, indeed, a dozen or more handsome edifices here labelled “Théâtre.” This, though, is a misnomer; they are merely theatrical inns where all manner of nomadic players and every variety of a disintegrated drama finds temporary lodgment. Yet it was not always so! Years ago, when the city contained less than one-half of the present population, there were three good home organizations where the drama was adequately presented. But that cockatrice of the art, the “starring” mania, demoralized actors and managers alike, leaving nothing of a once promotive and salubrious system excepting two managers, J. H. McVicker, of McVicker's Theatre and R. M. Hooley, of the theatre of that name—whose houses are now conducted on the “combination” plan, similarly to the other places of amusement.

There are unmistakeable indications that a permanent local organization would be amply sustained, and—but—pshaw! I am again drifting into the semi-annual appeal of the local critics for a Chicago Dramatic Stock Company. So frequent—and so ineffective—have these pleas become that now when a young writer, permitting his ardent wish to overcome his judgment, cries for the unattainable moon, the cynic, experience, replies in the equivalent to the expressive French idiom: *Il se promène encore dans le bleu.*

But why annoy you with our domestic squabbles? You want to know what will be presented at the theatres pending the Exhibition. The managers have all cheerfully responded to our request for a list of their bookings. The letters are heaped indiscriminately upon the desk before me. Let us select one at random!

The Columbia (christened by Ellen Terry) has secured the Lilian Russell Opera Company, who will sing in “La Cigale,” “The Mountebanks,” and “Incognita”; Daniel Frohman's Lyceum (New

York) Theatre Company, to be seen in plays of the order of the pseudo-sentimental "Men and Women"; the Bostonian Opera Company in a *répertoire* of operas ranging from Offenbach's spirited, charming "Les Braconniers" to Balfe's tattered, yet ever-welcome "Bohemian Girl"; and last, but most important of all, Henry Irving and his Lyceum Theatre Company.

Mr. Hooley's prospectus announces Augustin Daly's Company, E. S. Willard and Coquelin *ainé* and Jane Hading. The venerable McVicker writes, not without some delicate misgivings, that he has assumed the moral responsibility of harbouring the Eugene Tompkins "Black Crook" Company—a gorgeous revival of that ancient spectacle—to be followed (here the hand-writing is firmer) by Denman Thompson in the agrestic play "The Old Homestead." The Chicago Opera House, which is usually given over to spectacular burlesque every summer, will of course offer fop-food, through the medium of the American Extravaganza Company, whose *répertoire* consists of such indifferent emulations of Planché as "Sinbad," "The Crystal Slipper," "Arabian Nights," *und so weiter*. The manager of the Auditorium, an imposing building with a seating capacity of I know not how many thousands—five or six, I believe—says: "About the middle of April we will open our season for the World's Fair time with a big spectacle entitled "America," which will be produced under the direction of Messrs. Abbey, Schoeffel, and Grau. This will run through the summer." The Grand Opera House management believes Mr. Sol Smith Russell, a clever mimic, possesses sufficient talent to entertain all visitors who may care to spend an evening in the theatre. In Michigan Avenue, near Sixteenth Street, a fashionable quarter of the town, is a formidable-looking structure known as the First Regiment Armory. This will be temporarily transformed into a high-class *café chantant*. It will bear the name of the Trocadero. Hans von Bulow's orchestra and military band from Germany, Nikita, a Slavonic *Sängerin*, Ivanoff's Russian Troop and Vörös Miska's Gypsy Orchestra have been engaged. The Schiller is a beautiful theatre recently built by the Germans of this city. You will there have an opportunity to see such thorough artistes as Emil Passart, August Junkermann, Mitterwurzer, Ludwig Barnay, perhaps, and possibly Sonnenthal. Steele Mackaye, actor, manager, author—"Hazel Kirke" and "Paul Kauvar"—inventor and what not, is erecting a theatre near the Exhibition grounds. What the attraction is to be I am unable to ascertain. It will, however, I warrant you, be something ingenious. The Casino, as hitherto, will be devoted to minstrelsy. And then there are a number of outlying theatres, the Windsor, Havlin's, the Academy of Music, the Haymarket, the Alhambra, whose programmes are as strange and heterogeneous as our cherished minced pie.

There will also be music-halls in abundance—some innocent enough, others of a character, or rather of a lack of character, not necessary to describe.

You observe you will be confronted by a theatrical *menu* destitute of originality, but stupendous in its variety.

Every branch of art will be, if all signs fail not, brilliantly represented within the Exposition grounds excepting the grandest, the most impressive, but the most forsaken all, the Drama. Music, especially, will have a conspicuous place. The loveliest spot upon the vast area is select for her temple. Her fane will be the first to greet the visitors who shall come *via* the water entrance. Thousands of voices, thousands of reeds, are preparing to do honour to Euterpe ; but no one deigns to bestow a glance upon Melpomene within these grounds. It was you, you grand and drastic wight—who to-day are as misunderstood and as vilified as the art you so well defended and explained—who, thinking of the muse in penury wrote : *Je ne puis passer devant l'Opéra sans éprouver une sourde colère*. And you, Boucicault, shall we ever forget those glorious words you uttered just before you left us ? “The Drama is the highest form of art simply because it fills the mind with the highest and purest form of pleasure. No picture, however well painted ; no statue, however beautifully moulded ; no piece of music, however grandly composed, can command the souls of men and *endure* therein, as doth the terrible struggle of Othello with his fatal passion. Musical devotees may dispute this assertion ; but when any piece of music shall live for three centuries, pervading the minds of civilized mankind, never losing its freshness and its touch with the heart, then I can believe and acknowledge that music is the equal of the drama. Until then let that Muse remain where the Greeks placed her, in attendance on our mystery.”

EMIL FRIEND.



Plays of the Month.

"CHARLEY'S AUNT."

A three-act comedy by BRANDON THOMAS.

First produced at the Royalty Theatre on Wednesday evening, December 21st, 1892.

Stephen Spettigue ..	Mr. E. HENDRIE.	Brassett	Mr. C. THORNBURY.
Col. Sir Francis ..	Mr. BRANDON	The New Footman ..	Mr. G. GRAVES.
Chesney	THOMAS.	Donna Lucia	Miss ADA BRANSON.
Jack Chesney	Mr. PERCY LYNDAL.	D'Alvadorez	Miss KATE GORDON.
Charley Wykeham ..	Mr. H. FARMER.	Amy Spettigue	Miss N. BOUCICAULT.
Lord Fancourt	Mr. W. S. PENLEY.	Kitty Verdun	Miss E. CUDMORE.
Babberley		Ela Delahay	

Here is a case which admits of an adaptation of Mr. Punch's famous dictum concerning the living of life and the liver. "Is the play worth playing," is the query, and the answer comes pat "it all depends on the player." Not that this reflects discredit on the author. *Tout au contraire!* The piece is neatly designed and brightly written; its characters are outlined with distinctness, all in Mr. Brandon Thomas's capable manner—a manner which has always extorted admiration, from the crude days of the "Colour Sergeant" to the polished ones of "Marriage." But the central figure is everything. It is Sayers in the ring, Pitt in the Commons, Napoleon at Austerlitz. Given the Man of Destiny in the character, the piece is a two hours' triumph. Exchange him for a dummy, and a fiasco could hardly be averted. Luckily Mr. Penley and the Man of Destiny are one. It is this comedian's vocation to be exhibited, like specimens under the microscope, in all kinds of curious and undignified positions. Starving clerics, unjudicial judges, aged gentlemen minus the halo of reverence, such are the beings Fate, the stage-manager, has directed him to play. But Mr. Brandon Thomas has improved upon Fate. He looked upon Mr. Penley and saw that he was fair, a comic gem who would shine the brighter for an *outré* setting; and the setting he chose consisted of a lady's stiff silk skirts, an antique cap, a fichu, and a false front. That, in its way, was a vision of genius! As with the milk-maid so with Mr. Penley, "my face is my fortune." But this setting for Mr. Penley's face is worth twenty fortunes. The plot fades into the background. The pegs of ardent lovers' wiles to enjoy *têtes-à-têtes* with beloveds under the wing of a fictitious chaperon, are mere wooden contrivances upon which to hang pretexts for Mr. Penley's assumption of woman's stays and woman's ways, and woman's *cl'a'es*. But what does it matter? To follow the sham Donna Lucia in his droll enjoyment of the ingenuous caresses of his innocent nieces, his droll embarrassment over their ingenuous confidences, his droll satisfaction at their lovers' disgust, his droll horror at amorous advances indulged in by impecunious colonels and fortune-hunting lawyers, his droll determination to doff the degrading disguise, and still droller awakening to the necessity of maintaining it, is to make one's laughing way through a world of drollery. High art is never in the question, it is a kind of Bank Holiday art at best. But it is all wholesome, harmless, rollicking fun, and undeniably lightens the tedium of a winter's

evening, or, for that matter, of a dozen evenings, since Mr. Penley's humours are never exhausted at a sitting. Where a Napoleon is, lesser men, somehow, become invisible, and even Mr. Brandon Thomas—excellent actor as well as excellent writer—becomes, like Mr. Bret Harte's hero, a Man of No Account. Just two lines, however, for two of the players; one for Mr. Hendrie, a comedian of quite exceptional range and force of humour, and one for Miss Branson, an actress charming of presence, sweet of voice, interesting of manner, with the yet rarer endowment of brains; a lady who requires only opportunity to establish a position on the London stage.

"TROOPER CLAIRETTE."

A Musical Farceical Comedy, in three acts, by H. RAYMOND and A. MARS. Music by VICTOR ROGER.
Adapted for the English stage, by CHARLES FAWCETT.

First produced at the Opera Comique Theatre on Thursday Evening, December 22nd, 1892.

The Captain..	..	..	Mr WILLIE EDOUIN.	Bérénée Pistachau	Miss HILDA ABINGER.	
Emile Duval	..	..	Mr PERCY F. MARSHALL	Estelle	..	Miss FAYE DARRELL.
Gilbard	..	..	Mr FRED. MERVYN.	Charlotte	..	Miss EDINA CULLUM.
Michonnet	..	..	Mr JOHN WILKINSON.	Virginie	..	Miss MADGE RAY.
Benoit	..	..	Mr RICHARD BLUNT.	Annette	..	Miss STELLA BRANDON.
Épén	..	..	Mr CHARLES ROCK.	Aline	..	Miss DAWN GRIFFITHS.
The Viscount de Michodière	..	..	Mr HARRY EVERSFIELD	Michotte	..	Miss JESSIE COX.
Polseau	..	..	Mr JAMES A. COOK.	Rosalie	..	Miss LILLIE BELMORE.
Jolliquet	..	..	Mr GILBERT PORTEOUS	Clairette Pastoreau	..	Miss ALICE ATHERTON.

There are "Breeches" plays as well as "Breeches" Bibles. The former are not so scarce as the latter, but they excite the same kind of sensation of mild naughtiness, and people can their pages with something of the same feeling that they are committing a mild and not very unbecoming impropriety. Years ago these absurdities took the form of preposterous comedy. Young widows—they were always widows, an additional reason for thinking that Mr. Malcolm Salaman was right when in cold blood he wrote "A little widow is a dangerous thing"—would slip into faultless-fitting uniform, and, as dashing young cavalry officers, flog their patent-leather boots, twirl their wee moustaches, make desperate love of an exaggerated and effeminate kind to their bosom female friend, and so excite the jealousy of her staunch but bashful swain that he would promptly put the question which the masquerade was designed to evoke. Different times, different manners! Our sense of comedy now revolts at such bare-faced horse-play; only in burlesque and pantomime can we make believe like the children, and pretend to accept the generous lines of the female figure as those of the lithe and lissom hero. French farce, however, is (like Rienzi) a law unto itself, and as long as the popular eye and the popular ear are captivated by pretty figures, pretty faces, pretty dresses, pretty tunes, "brayed in a mortar"—as Robert Browning would say—with ancient jokes, pointless dialogue, plotless intrigue and irrelevant drollery, artless concoctions like "Trooper Clairette" will not fail for want of a public. Perhaps this does not quite meet the case. It should read, so long as merry actresses like Miss Atherton, full of trills and capers and sauciness, and actors like Mr. Willie Edouin, quaintly-whimsical and complex marvels of comic device, are free to gambol at their own sweet will through half-a-dozen scenes, the taste for "Trooper Clairettes" will continue. It is not here as in "Hamlet." The play is not the thing. To describe it as *a* thing would come much nearer the mark. Clairette suspects the fidelity of her husband, a sergeant in the French Reserves, and to keep an eye on him, dons the uniform and plays the jolly soldier-boy. That is practically the piece. What it was in France, a nodding

acquaintance with the French drama will readily suggest. But this it is not in Merrie England—one of our most comforting national superstitions being that in a “play-hoose,” we, like the Scotchman, “canna’ tolerate the ungodly.” Still, it is funny enough by fits and starts, like a circus clown, and what with the lavish mounting and the intensely diverting grotesqueness of Mr. Edouin, and the unflagging vivacity and inimitable charm of winsome Miss Atherton—the only actress now on the stage who is mistress of the arts of burlesque—and the aid supplied by such sterling comedians as Mr. Marshall and Mr. Wilkinson, and dimpling Miss Belmore, the play fleets the time pleasantly enough, though with little about it of the dramatic Golden Age.

“THE LOST PARADISE.”

A new play, in three acts, by HENRY C. DE MILLE. Adapted from “Das Verlorene Paradies” of LUDWIG FULDA.

First produced at the Adelphi Theatre on Thursday evening, December 22nd, 1892.

Reuben Maitland ..	Mr C. WARNER.	Andrew Knowlton ..	Mr W. A. ELLIOTT.
Ralph Standish ..	Mr W. L. ABINGDON.	Mrs. Knowlton ..	Miss ETHEL HOPE.
Bob Appleton ..	Mr T. B. THALBERG.	Margaret Knowlton..	Miss DOROTHY DOHR.
Fletcher ..	Mr. SANT MATTHEWS.	Polly Fletcher ..	Miss MARY KEGAN.
Joe Barrett ..	Mr J. NORTHCOTE.	Julia ..	Miss A. ROGERS.
Schwarz ..	Mr CHARLES DALTON.	Nell ..	Miss GRACE WARNER.
Benzel ..	Mr G. W. COCKBURN.	Kate ..	Miss MARION DOLBY.
Hyatt ..	Mr HOWARD RUSSELL.	Cinders ..	Miss CLARA JECKS.
Billy Hopkins ..	Mr WELTON DALE.		

It says little for the capacity of the English stage as a serious factor in modern life that no genuine Strike play has yet been seen. Every month, in this district or in that, the labour market is convulsed by some revolt originating either in the camp of capital or labour. Yet the stage, the champions of which persistently claim for it that it is in touch with the actual life of the day, stands calmly by, apparently insensible to the conflict. Mr. Wilson Barrett did make one effort to get abreast of the question in the ill-fated “People’s Idol,” but eye, hand, heart, all were melo-dramatic, and he got no nearer than the very fringe of his subject. Mr. George Moore’s “Strike at Arlingford” is understood to come to the grapple, but then Mr. Moore’s play is caviare to the general (manager), and we must wait for the Independents to “try it on the dog.” Meantime, a hearty welcome must be given to “The Lost Paradise.” The play comes from Germany *via* the States, and bears many traces of its journey. Now it is heavy and dull, anon flashy with the glitter of cheap Yankee dramaticisms. Like an Olla Podrida, it embraces everything, from antiquated Teutonic (and platitudinarian) didacticism to antiquated Beecher Stowe-icism. But it has just one scene and just one character for which it deserves a long life and a merry one; and which raise it considerably above the level of the average Adelphi play. Maitland, a foreman, loves his employer’s daughter, and for this reason would stand between his master and the hands out on strike. But when he discovers that his master’s wealth has been coined from the pilfered fruits of his (Maitland’s) brain, that the workmen are regarded as dogs, that his own love is, in Margaret’s eyes, almost an insult, he throws in his lot with the other men, and rapidly brings the strike to a successful conclusion. Now, there is nothing very novel in this; practically it is once again the aspiring Claude, the haughty Pauline, and the purse-proud Deschappelles from “The Lady of Lyons.” The situations are conventional and throw the accent more on the “melo”

than the "dramatic." But the two exceptions referred to prove of enormous value. The one is the character of the heroine, a woman whose heart gradually bursts through the crusts of class prejudice, education, and ignorance, and leaves her a piece of pure, palpitating womanhood responsive only to the voice of the suffering and needy. The other is an interview between employers and employed, in which a typical deputation of workmen attend upon their masters, and eye to eye hammer out the knotty question of wages in the language of the people. In each instance, thanks to the players no less than to the playwrights, something very like a semblance of reality is attained; hardly any praise being too high for the delicate art and fine emotional qualities exhibited by Miss Dorothy Dorr, or for the singular suggestion of grim life-and-death tenacity revealed in the interview between Mr. Elliot and Mr. Abingdon, on one side, and Mr. Warner, Mr. Cockburn, and Mr. Dalton on the other. Such a play demands a leader, and in Mr. Warner Messrs. Gatti have the very man. Because he is not poetical, the superior sometimes tilt the nose at Mr. Warner. But fine prose is just as good as fine poetry, and Mr. Warner is a fine prose actor. He can grip, hold, raise, depress, and pretty much do what he likes with a scene; and for sound, homely, life-like work one could not better his admirable Reuben Maitland. Mr. Dalton and Mr. Cockburn as robustious and petitionary workmen, are notable figures; as also are Miss Warner, a factory girl with a lame foot and a hopeless love, and Miss Clara Jecks as an up-to-date Topsy—widely diverse parts, but both played with remarkable finish and distinction. Clever Mr. Elliott hardly gets his chance; Mr. Matthews is lucky in filling once again the character of cynical chorus; Mr. Abingdon dignifies a thankless part with discreet and thoughtful work, and Mr. Thalberg and Miss Keegan (a young lady it is pleasant to welcome after her promising *débüt* in "Shakespeare") are capital—as well as comely—light-comedy lovers. "A Lost Paradise" is a long step in advance for the Adelphi, and, if this be a beginning, it will not be long before we reach Paradise regained.

"THE BABES IN THE WOOD AND BOLD ROBIN HOOD."

A Pantomime, by HORACE LENNARD; Music by OSCAR BARRETT.

First produced at the Crystal Palace on Saturday afternoon, December 24th, 1892.

Nipper	Miss ADA BARRY.	Father Time	Mr W. BRUNTON, Sen.
Tarara	Mr. ARTHUR WATTS.	The Spirit of the Past	Miss E. URQUHART.
Boomdeay	Mr. WATTY BRUNTON.	The Spirit of the	} Miss O. VAUGHAN.
Robln Hood.. ..	Miss ELSIE IRVING.	Future	
Maid Marian	Miss LAURA LINDEN.	Goodwill	Miss MADGE SEYMOUR.
Friar Tuck	Mr. FRANK AYRTON.	Discontent	Mr FRANK LEIGHTON.
Little John	Mr. W. LUGG.	Crystalia	Mdlle. SAVIGNY.
Will Scarlett	Miss F. TERRISS.	Jack Frost	Miss MINNIE TITE.
Alan-a-Dale	Miss LENA WALLIS.	Messengers of Love,	
George-a-Green ..	Miss GRACE LESLIE.	THE CHILDREN OF THE NATIONAL TRAINING	
Much, the Miller's Son	Miss CORA DAY.	SCHOOL FOR DANCING.	
Daisy Buttercup ..	Miss MARIE ROBSON.	<i>Morals.</i>	
Polly Primrose	Miss KITTY HAYES.	Jack Daw	Miss KITTY LOFTUS.
Katie Cowslip	Miss ADA SRTACCHI.	Margery Daw	Miss ROSIE LEYTON.
May Meadows	Miss EVA CARLTON.	Baron See-saw	Mr SAM WILKINSON.
Gipsy Fortune Teller	Miss PAULINE.	The Baroness	Mr MAT ROBSON.
Tommy Atkins	Messrs. H. & F. KITCHEN	Dame Gilton	Miss AMY LIDDON.
The Coachman	Mr. E. ZANFRETTA.	Jane	Miss FPADELLE.
The Cook	Mr. H. EWINS.	Bessie	Miss NINNIE INCH.
<i>Immortals.</i>		Tipper	Mons H. AGOST.
Santa Claus	Mr REUBEN INCH.		

The modern pantomime producer is very like the gentleman in the "Last stage of all—that ends this strange, eventful history" of Shakespeare's Seven Ages—sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. He buys wholesale in the gaudiest, costliest, bedazzlingest market, and

leaves a host of shapely females and diverting males to sort the things out to make themselves attractive or comic, as their tastes may direct, and to patch together some tattered remnants of fairy lore, until after a three hours' traffic of the stage the pantomime can, with decency, be brought to a lame and impotent conclusion. But not so Mr. Oscar Barrett! He combines the methods of the old school with the profusion of the new. He treats his pantomimes as plays, subordinates everything to unerring taste, and renders "the things that are Cæsar's" unto the childish Cæsar for whom they were first intended. "The Babes in the Wood" is no exception to this genial rule. Mr. Lennard is a graceful, fluent writer of mildly witty verse. Mr. Barrett's spectacles suit him to perfection, and out of the dove-tailed stories of the Babes and Robin Hood he weaves a really pretty pantomime. Some of its features are quaintness or prettiness itself, notably an animated alphabet for the instruction of the babes, what the wax-work exhibitor calls a life-like reproduction of the inmates of a Lowther Arcadian Noah's Ark, and a dance of shepherd lads and lasses imported straight from the magic glades of Arden. The concerted dance of Noah and his family, ungainly wooden creatures with chests and backs equally convex, and their sexes so slightly differentiated that to tell the women easily they would have—like Mr. Jerome's ladies in Utopia—to be labelled, is in itself worth a journey far longer than that from London to the Crystal Palace. Mr. Barrett's actors, too, do him credit on the whole, though a few square pegs uneasily joggle in circular holes. The mercurial Miss Kitty Loftus, is an ideal boy-babe, restless, mischievous, pert, and, *mirabile dictu*, almost as funny as a man. Miss Rosie Leyton shared her labours and success. Mr. Sam Wilkinson, as a wicked Baron not unworthy of descent from the titled sinners of Mr. W. H. Payne, and two delightful villains—one sinister and grey, the other kind and rubicund—murderers at "a penny plain and two-pence coloured," provide great merriment. Miss Laura Linden is an agile heroine. Mr. Lugg's fine voice and hearty style are thrown away upon a worthless part, and Miss Florence Terriss shows much promise as Will Scarlett. Madame Katti Lanner's ballets exhibit more poetical invention than usual; one in particular, of the merciful robins frozen out by the demon Jack Frost, and rescued by the Snow Queen, revealing a charming vein of fancy. With this pantomime, Mr. Oscar Barrett touches the highest point of achievement on the Crystal Palace stage.

"THE NAUGHTY FORTY THIEVES."

A Pantomime written by GEOFFREY THORN.

First produced at the Grand Theatre on Monday afternoon, December 26th, 1892.

MORTALS.			
Ali Baba	Mr. HARRY RANDALL.	Shagbab	Mr. ROBSON.
Ganem	Miss ALICE MAYDUE.	Ali Ben Crusha	Mr. WADE.
Cogia Baba	Mr. HARRY STEELE.	Morgiana	Miss MINNIE PALMER.
Abdallah	Miss MINNIE MARIO.	IMMORTALS.	
Mohassarac	Mr. MAITLAND MARLER.	Father Christmas	Mr. SAM MAY.
Cassim Baba	Mr. F. ESMOND.	The Geni of Love	Miss KATE VITO.
Mrs. Cassim	Mr. S. MAY.	Sesame	Mr. J. M. JONES.
Ben Assan	Mr. SAKER HARLOW.	Holly	Miss ARNOLD.
The Cuckoo	Mr. THOMAS HARLOW.	Mistletoe	Miss KANSLAND.
Mocho	Mr. CHARLES WILLS.	Snaptadragon	Mr. CATELL.
Cocho	Mr. GEORGE H. DARRE.	Folly	Miss FARNALL.

Mr. Thorn is perhaps the wittiest and funniest pantomime writer now alive. Moreover he knows his fairy history as well as even the late Mr. Blanchard did, and that is saying much. But even Homer

nods, and Mr. Thorn claims no higher attributes than his. It is true he nods but once or twice in telling the tale of the Forty Thieves, but each time the thread of the story is broken, and—in true pantomime—the story counts for much. The Spirit of Realism is the Demon of Discord. Because the Jew looms large on the horizon, and every writer of renown, from Mr. Hall Caine to Mr. Harold Frederick, is absorbed in Hebraic studies, therefore the gentle Israelite must intrude upon the wood-cutter of Bagdad, and impart to the ancient romance an unnecessarily Eastern—not to say East-Endern—tone. But for this old-clo' lieutenant of Abdallah, Mr. Thorn would have told his story well—with a maximum of exciting legendary incident and a minimum of obtrusive modernity. Pantomimes are always made by one scene or one feature—animate or inanimate. The Blondin donkey at one house, a gorgeous procession at another, a ballet at a third will make the pantomime's fortune. Last year at the Grand it was Miss Lottie Collins as She who must not Ta-ra-ra-Boom-De-Ay. Even her colossal shadow could, however, scarcely envelop Mr. Harry Randall and his antic disposition. This year he has not to elude any such massive personality. His Ali Baba occupies the very centre of the stage like a provincial Hamlet, and enjoys—so to speak—the sole attention of the lime-light man. It deserves the distinction. Mr. Arthur Roberts himself is not more original, nor Mr. Harry Nicholls more mirthfully sad, than this quaint actor with a genius for homely comedy as well as for singing comic songs. There is no one in the company to compare with this admirable mime. His male associates are, for the most part, little better than “knockabout” gentlemen—actors, if the term be at all permissible, whose sole idea of acting is to hurl themselves about with the object of hurting other people, or injuring themselves. The ladies of the company, however, employ less violent methods, and are proportionately more agreeable to watch. Miss Minnie Palmer, more restrained and less buoyant than formerly, flashes sparkling eyes and twinkling feet, dazzling smiles and glittering gems, as a singularly spry Morgiana. Miss Minnie Mario sings with uncommon brilliancy as the dashing captain, and Miss Alice Maydue is a pugilistic Ganem.

“LITTLE BO-PEEP, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, AND HOP O' MY THUMB.”

A Pantomime written by Sir AUGUSTUS HARRIS and J. WILTON JONES Music by J. CROOK.

Produced at Drury Lane Theatre on Monday evening, December 26th, 1892.

Little Bo Peep .. .	Miss MARIE LOFTUS.	Fee Faw Fum, Esq. ..	Mr. H. M. CLIFFORD.
Little Red Riding Hood	Miss MARIE LLOYD.	Mrs. Fee Faw Fum ..	Mr. E. S. GORTON.
Dame Mary Quite Con-	} Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAMS.	Mr. Wolf .. .	} Brothers GRIFFITHS.
trary .. .		Mrs. Wolf .. .	
Daddy Thumb .. .	Mr. DAN LENO.	Master Wolf .. .	Master GRIFFITHS.
Goody Thumb .. .	Mr. H. CAMPBELL.	Toddlekins .. .	Mr. FRED. WALTON.
Hop o' my Thumb ..	Little TICH.	Nipper .. .	Miss RETTA WALTON.
Granny Green .. .	Mr. JOHN D'AUBAN.	Ariella .. .	Miss IDA HEATH.
Little Boy Blue .. .	Miss ADA BLANCHE.	Elfinella .. .	Miss MABEL LOVE.
Squire Oofless .. .	Mr. WILLIAM MORGAN.	Gnome of the Glow-}	} Miss EMMA D'AUBAN.
Prince Popperty ..	Miss MADGE LUCAS.	Worm Glen .. .	

Three pantomimes rolled into one are not exactly food for babes. A dramatic Cerberus—“three gentlemen at once,” as Mrs. Malaprop described him—is apt to be puzzling, as well as fearsome. But Sir Augustus Harris will have it so; and nothing—not even the great British Public—must stand in the way of Augustus Cæsar. Consequently we resign ourselves after a peep—a rather wearisome peep—at the domestic infelicities of the Thumbs, including the bathing,

violet-powdering, and putting to bed of the precocious Hop, to various irrelevant scenes dealing with the muddled and mutilated histories of Little Red Riding Hood and Little Bo-Peep. Sir Augustus offers consolation of a kind by setting these pastorals in a Watteau-ballet frame composed of the costliest silks and satins and brocades of the daintiest conceivable hues, and further treats us to a processional representation—highly inventive, yet curiously realistic—of English sports and pastimes, from golf to football, and skating to lawn tennis. But with more than a sigh of relief we see the last of the processions disappear, we turn from the disillusionising capers of the secondary heroines, and even the sylvan loveliness of a wondrous forest panorama, and greet the re-appearance of Mr. Campbell and Mr. Leno as captives of the awe-inspiring ogre, Fee Faw Fum. Pantomime proper is safe in the hands of these actors—when they are allowed an opportunity; and to the credit of the great theatrical spectacle-maker be it said that presently he provides them with one. Not even in the palmy days, indeed, when pantomime creations were as consistent as poetical and tragic ones—in some cases perhaps even more so—did anything worthier of the fairy world appear. Mr. Jacomb Hood might well reproduce the scene in an Imperial Purple Fairy Book, and the pen of Mr. Andrew Lang might usefully be employed to describe its ecstatic thrills, its grim and gruesome humour. In a mighty chamber in the ogre's castle, what lodging-house keepers would call a bed-sitting room, upon a table seven feet high, the wretched Thumbs are thrown and trussed by the giant and his wife before being hung upon a murderous-looking roasting-jack suspended before a fiery furnace of a roasting fire. Here perfect illusion is attained. The actors appear pigmies beside the ogre and his spouse. Hop and the rest of the numerous Thumbs, when they too are taken captive, appear mites against the colossal furniture, and that fine sense of awe which fairy-tales used to inspire when we were young is—for once—reproduced without the intervention of omnipotent imagination. This is the one scene to see, the one scene on which to congratulate the famous manager. It is his masterpiece—though, no doubt, he thinks otherwise, and gives the palm to his wondrous "Hall of the Million Mirrors." In the latter instance the triumph is purely inventive and spectacular. By a cunning arrangement of enormous mirrors, the superbly-clad crowds with which the vast stage is filled, illustrating and enacting the key scenes from all the familiar fairy-tales, being so dexterously reflected and re-reflected in the glass that the assemblage seems to number thousands, and the Hall to extend as far as the eye can see. This, however, is only a marvel of mechanism, a miracle of organisation. The ogre's castle, on the other hand, reveals an unlooked-for reverence for the truly dramatic; and raises hopes that Sir Augustus Harris is feeling his way back cautiously but steadily to old-time fairy-land. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Leno, of course, extract a world of humour from the sufferings of the parent Thumbs, but their share of the merriment created is less than that of Little Tich, whose Hop o' my Thumb is a highly diverting piece of acting; while the prettiest and most rhythmical dancer seen at the Lane for many years is Miss Mabel Love, whose skill and grace in an enchanting invention of Mr. John d'Auban, called the Glow-Worm ballet, render her a prominent feature in this most magnificent and more than usually pantomimic Christmas production of Sir Augustus Harris.

“DICK WHITTINGTON.”

A Christmas Pantomime written by Horace Lennard. Music by Oscar Barrett.
Produced at the New Olympic Theatre on Monday evening, December 26th, 1892.

Dick Whittington ..	Miss EDITH BRUCE.	Roger	Miss AMY TREVELYAN.
His Cat	Mr. CHARLES LAURI.	Captain Barnacle ..	Mr. JULIAN CROSS.
Alderman Fitzwarren ..	Mr. FRED. EMNEY.	The First Mate .. .	Miss FLORRIE HARMON.
Mrs. Fitzwarren .. .	Miss KATE SULLIVAN	Boatswain	Mr. W. T. RILEY.
Alice	Miss ALICE BROOKES.	Middy	Miss ROSA KELLY.
'Liza	Mr. VICTOR STEVENS.	The Emperor of Morocco	Miss KATE CHARD.
Jack	Mr. HARRY GRATTAN.	His Grand Chamberlain	Mr. MARIUS GIRARD.

Mr. Oscar Barrett is another Marcus Curtius. In the West-End world of pantomime, Sir Augustus Harris has struck a yawning gulf—Drury Lane standing on the hither side, and every other play-house on the other. To save Pantomime London, as his Roman predecessor did to save the City of the Seven Hills, Mr. Barrett defies augury, dares destruction, and, in the garb of Dick Whittington astride upon his cat, plunges into the abyss. It is an heroic act, but the gods safeguard heroes, and Mr. Barrett will doubtless find—as did Horatius when he plunged harness-clad into the boiling Tiber—that they will “bear bravely up his chin” and bring him safely out of dangerous depths. ’Tis not in mortals—and theatrical managers, though often carrying themselves like beings of diviner mould, are but mortal after all—to command success; but, as Sempronius was told, they can do more, they can deserve it. This Mr. Barrett has done at the New Olympic. In “Dick Whittington” he has put upon the stage a pantomime worthy of the name. It is, as was said of a recent intellectual Hamlet, funny without being vulgar. The old lines of the old story are re-traced with a firm hand from the miserable ’prentice days of Dick to his sudden accession to boundless wealth and honours at the Moorish court, and his return to Old “Chepe” to fill the Mayoral chair. Never has the pretty story been more prettily told. Mr. Lennard and Mr. Barrett, between them, have imparted quite a poetical air to the hero’s poverty, disgrace, despair, thrilling adventures, and romantic success. They permit no irrelevant buffoonery to obscure the character of Dick. His wanderings, like those of Ulysses, constitute the foundation and super-structure of this Odyssey. In everything the authors receive inestimable aid from their company. Miss Edith Bruce shares with Miss Farren that “shindy” spirit, as the Americans call it, which invariably animates a scene and compels the liveliest interest in its fortunate possessor. Miss Bruce, moreover, has a touch of homely pathos, and, with its help, her dispirited Dick on Highgate Hill; and her shipwrecked Dick off the coast of Morocco—scenes exquisitely illustrated by the painters—enjoy a very definite dramatic charm. Mr. Lauri’s “Cat” is still a kitten, though we have known it these, who shall say how many years. A seasoned old salt, surprisingly comical, is the Barnacle of Mr. Julian Cross. Broad humour, of the usual “topical” kind, is furnished wholesale by Mr. Emney and Mr. Stevens; and of the rest—notably Miss Kate Chard and Mr. Deane Brand, who sing with great effect—it may be said that they are *Vox et præterea*—little or *nihil*. Several ballets, including a delightful poetical vision seen by way-worn Dick, testify to the taste and invention of Madame Katti Lanner; one, indeed, the Blue Ballet in the Moorish palace, being certainly the loveliest pictorial composition ever seen upon the London stage. As a display of faultless taste, “Dick Whittington” is indeed a unique production. And the extraordinary enthusiasm with which it was greeted was not a whit more than its due.

"HYPATIA."

A Classical Play, in four acts, by G. STUART OGILVIE. Founded on Kingsley's Novel.
First produced at the Haymarket Theatre on Monday evening, January 2nd, 1893.

Cyril	Mr. FERNANDEZ.	Kaliphronos	Mr. HOLMAN CLARK.
Arsenius	Mr. FOSS.	Karos	Mr. CRAWLEY.
Peter the Reader	Mr. HUDSON.	Zenocles	Mr. GRAHAM.
James	Mr. GARRY.	First Citizen	Mr. MARK PATON.
Paul	Mr. ALLAN.	Drusus	Mr. HORNIMAN.
Philammon	Mr. FRID. TERRY.	Ruth	Miss OLGA BRANDON.
Orestes	Mr. LEWIS WALLER.	Barca	Miss C. MORLAND.
Issachar	Mr. TREE.	Helen	Miss CONYERS D'ARCY.
Kallisthenes	Mr. A. WIGLEY.	Suana	Miss MARION GREY.
Jonadab	Mr. PIFFARD.	Leda	Miss C. CARROW.
Marcus	Mr. REVELLE.	Nerea	Miss H. LEVERETT.
Theon	Mr. KEMBLE.	Thymele	Miss JOHNSON.
Hazael	Mr. MINTON.	Hypatia	Miss JULIA NEILSON.
Perimos	Mr. CHANDLER.		

So astute a gentleman as Mr. Tree must have seen the chance he had with an adaptation of Kingsley's noble romance. But, unlike the hero of the comic song, he did not take it. The chance lay in the direction of another "Dancing Girl." To Mr. Jones we owed an absorbing, if distorted vision of the Pagan of A.D. 1890. What might not have been made of a contrast of the rival Pagans—and one of them another Dancing Girl—about whom Alexandria was divided nearly fifteen hundred years ago! Practically, however, the lovely Pagan, Hypatia, has little more to do with the drama than lending it her attractive name. Mr. Ogilvie does, no doubt, utilise a good deal of Charles Kingsley's material; treating us even to the tag-end of that terribly dull lecture of the beautiful philosopher's which Kingsley ought to have left unwritten. But the material he has used is of little value; the really notable characters, incidents, and scenes he has shrunk from laying hands on. Gone are Miriam, the merciless witch, and Raphael—the cynic and unconvincing convert; gone is Pelagia the wayward, the supple, brilliant embodiment (for a pious Churchman!) of the Eternal Feminine—Pelagia the innocent Magdalen, with her Viking lover and that grand old Saga warrior, Wulf. They can ill be spared. With them lay nearly all the human nature in the story, and Mr. Ogilvie's efforts to make good the deficiency are not altogether successful. To begin with, he has gone for his central character to the Jew's quarter, where—in fiction and in drama—we have been led rather too often of late. *Cherchez le Juif* may, for a season or two, supersede the older *Cherchez la femme*, without any harm being done; but even of Mr. Ogilvie's Issachar it is easy enough to get too much. This Shylock-cum-Mephistopheles-cum-Machiavelli-cum-Virginus, patriot, statesman, demagogue and Roman father rolled into one, might be a great creation; but to be that, he must dominate the drama. Unfortunately he appears always as a picturesque irrelevancy; his motives are not grounded in the bed-rock of humanity; he is, in fact, a creature of the footlights, perfecting his wiles against the Pagan beauty and the Prefect-voluptuary for the express edification of the patrons of the play. One human note there is, and this must stand to Mr. Ogilvie's credit, but the author strikes it only once, and it therefore fails to give prevailing colour and tone to the piece. This note is the betrayal of Issachar's daughter Ruth by Orestes, and the consequent ruin of the Jew's deep-laid schemes for his own triumph through the marriage of the Prefect with Hypatia—revenge ousting ambition from the old man's breast, and Orestes' death at his hands becoming the sole object of his existence. This tragedy, as also the later one of Hypatia's and Philammon's death at the hands of the fanatic monks, is but tediously and clumsily arrived at; only too often the scene

moving heavily and the characters expressing themselves in language of painful modernity or of Bombastes-Furiosone strain. So exquisitely wrought, however, is the Alma Tadamaskue frame of Alexandrian views—reminiscent of Mr. Wilson Barrett's earlier "Claudian" pictures; so noble do many of these royally-garbed players appear; so intoxicating an atmosphere of physical loveliness does Miss Neilson cast over the scene; and with such a mass of intricate detail, studied cleverness, and absorbing mixture of realism and romance does Mr. Tree disguise the conventional outlines of Issachar the Jew, that the play, despite its many failings, is a work that everyone should see. It will make no reputations, nor will it even add to those already made. Miss Neilson can but look, and that she does divinely; Mr. Terry is in scarcely better plight. Mr. Waller, virile, strong, commanding as of old, has still less chance as the Roman Prefect, whom he was surely born to realise. Miss Brandon has but one scene—her confession to her father, and, because of its—and her—humanity, it becomes *the* scene of the play. Of the rest there is no call to speak. They fill their parts, but the parts are nothing worth.

"A WHITE LIE."

A comedy, in four acts, by SYDNEY GRUNDY.

Reproduced in a revised form, upon the re-appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, at the Avenue Theatre on Saturday evening, January 7th, 1893.

Sir John Molyneux .. Mr. KENDAL.
George Desmond .. Mr. F. H. MACKLIN.
Captain Tempest .. Mr. CECIL M. YORK.
Wheatcroft .. Mr. G. P. HUNTLEY.
Dixon .. Mr. H. DEANE.

Lady Molyneux .. Miss ANNIE IRISH.
Hannah .. Miss B. HUNTLEY.
Maid Servant .. Miss MARY CLAYTON.
Daisy .. Miss E. BOWMAN.
Kate Desmond .. Mrs. KENDAL.

After some four years' wandering in America, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal have come home again, with armfuls of Transatlantic laurels, to a London which has spared them too long, and is heartily glad to welcome them back. We have not so many *comédiennes* of the calibre of Mrs. Kendal that we can afford to do without her year after year; and the crowded audience which filled the Avenue Theatre from floor to ceiling on the night of the home-coming of the clever couple to the London stage was the best possible proof of their popularity. Nor did Mr. Kendal show any lack of judgment in re-opening the theatre with a play which was already favourably known to metropolitan audiences. No doubt there were few in the theatre on the first night who were not familiar with the plot of Mr. Grundy's clever comedy, and who had not before enjoyed its bright dialogue and smart, epigrammatic flashes of wit. But additional interest was given to the revival for those who knew the piece, by the fact that Mr. Grundy had in some measure both re-written and remodelled his original production. Of the outcome of the author's second thoughts there may be some difference of opinion, but upon the whole it is probable that, whether or no he has positively strengthened or improved the play, he has at any rate increased its prospect of popularity in the widest sense of the term. The serious interest, never very strong, because of the improbability of any reasonably sane judge of character being taken in for an instant by Kate Desmond's white lie, has now become thinner still. Indeed, so obvious is it that the good-natured woman's deception is of that harmless and futile kind which deceives nobody, that the author makes no pretence about it, but permits the pseudo-somnolent Sir John Molyneux to flatly declare that he doesn't believe a word that his dear sister-in-law is saying, when she would fain take upon her shoulders the folly of his wife's

flirtation with the unscrupulous Captain Tempest. Again, Mr. Grundy has now added another act, in which a game of hide-and-seek is played by the two husbands and the two wives in true farcical-comedy fashion, arising out of surreptitious midnight visits to the "Blue Posts," where the Tempest of this tea-cup tragedy has invited the foolish but innocent Lady Molyneux to meet him, and where she goes, prompted not by passion but by a very practical desire to get herself out of a scrape. The situations in this new scene are scarcely as original as might have been expected of Mr. Grundy, but they serve their purpose, and, from the popular standpoint at all events, will probably be considered a capital addition to the play. But even if the probabilities of the plot were still more shadowy, and it were possible to think that jealous George Desmond could believe for an instant in the faithlessness of his charming and devoted wife, it would be easy to condone the author's offence in consideration of the witty dialogue with which he has enriched his work, and the countless opportunities which he has given to Mr. and Mrs. Kendal and their clever company for manifesting the particular form of histrionic talent with which they are severally endowed. Mrs. Kendal, as the impulsive, *bourgeoise*, big-hearted, motherly Mrs. Desmond, not only acted with inimitable brightness and spontaneity, but looked so charming that George Desmond's volcanic jealousy was perfectly intelligible. With touches of tenderness here and there, but for the most part in a spirit of true comedy, Mrs. Kendal made Kate Desmond a very real and womanly woman—a bundle of contradictions, but irresistibly charming withal; and if at times on the opening night there seemed to be a slight tendency to over-act, it might easily have been that even an actress of Mrs. Kendal's great talent and experience was just a little overwhelmed by the extreme cordiality of her welcome home. Mr. Kendal has rarely done anything better than the sleepy, gentlemanly, easy-going Sir John Molyneux, and his reception was scarcely less hearty than that accorded to his brilliant wife. Mr. F. H. Macklin, always a sound, reliable actor, was admirable as the devoted but dynamic George Desmond; but Mr. Cecil York, as Captain Tempest, and Mr. G. P. Huntley as his rascally man, Wheatcroft, somewhat exaggerated the already sufficiently disagreeable qualities of the characters they had to represent. Miss Annie Irish made a graceful and intelligent Lady Molyneux; Miss Barbara Huntley was the more or less faithful Hannah; and the little girl, Daisy, was prettily played by Miss Empsie Bowman.

"ROBIN GOODFELLOW."

An original play, in three acts, by R. C. CARTON.

First produced at the Garrick Theatre on Thursday evening, January 5th, 1893.

Mrs. Barbrook	Mrs. EDMUND PHILIPS.	Valentine Barbrook ..	Mr. JOHN HARE.
Grace	Miss KATE RORKE.	Hugh Kokeby	Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON
Constance	Miss NORREYS.	Stanley Trevenen ..	Mr. SYDNEY BROUGH.
Mrs. Bute Curzon ..	Miss COMPTON.	Rev. Bortwick Soundy	Mr. D. ROBERTSON.
Emma	Miss HELEN LUCK.	Dr. Milner	Mr. GILBERT HARE.

It is so unspeakably pleasant in these prosaic days to strike a vein of pure romance that there will be few indeed who will be disposed to cavil at the romantic story told so brightly by Mr. R. C. Carton in his new play, or to elevate the nose of scorn because of the attenuated nature of the plot, and the general improbability of the incidents. True that even the guileless little granddaughter and the doting, affectionate old grandmother, Constance and Mrs. Barbrook, must have been

singularly simple not to be able to see through the transparent sophistries and rather clumsy villainies of the middle-aged Mephistopheles, Valentine Barbrook, who nearly cheats the one out of her lover, and the other out of her money by the stalest of stage devices in the form of a suppressed letter, and a similarity of Christian names; but the human interest in the love-affairs of the two delightful young couples—Constance Barbrook and Stanley Trevenen, and Grace Barbrook and Hugh Rokeby, *alias* Robin Goodfellow—is so strong that improbabilities are condoned, and one feels that if all these things would scarcely have happened in real life as they do on the stage of the Garrick, well, it is so much the worse for reality. Again, Mr. Carton has stuffed his dialogue with smart things. The dramatic pudding is all plums and spice and candied citron, and he would be exacting, indeed, who would find fault with such toothsome fare. The story of the play may be chronicled very briefly. A delightful old lady, Mrs. Barbrook, of so amiable and hospitable a nature that she is known as the Family Pantechnicon for her good-natured harbourage of needy relations, has a nice little fortune of some £15,000, upon which her middle-aged scamp of a son, Valentine Barbrook, father of Grace, and uncle of Constance, casts longing eyes, as a means of escape from serious financial embarrassments, induced by a combination of riotous living (in a highly discreet way) and rash speculation in mining shares. To secure this money he works upon his doting old mother's mind in connection with a certain mortgage, held by Sir Basil Rokeby, grandfather of Hugh, and obtains from her in his own airy, Harold Skimpoleish fashion, "an absurd thing which they call—ha! ha!—a Power of Attorney!" By accident, Grace learns the nature of such a document, and the power for evil it confers upon an unscrupulous rascal, and, knowing her father only too well, she threatens to expose him, but is held back by consideration for her grandmother's health, as that worthy old soul suffers from heart disease, and the family doctor has warned her friends that any sudden shock might be fatal. The Machiavellian Valentine plays this as his trump card in a stormy scene with his daughter, and takes the trick. Meantime he hopes to save exposure and secure the money by marrying Sir Basil's grandson to his own niece, Constance, who is in love with Stanley Trevenen, while Hugh is as deeply in love with Grace as she with him, although he does not at first know it. Then comes a pretty game of cross-purposes with the lovers, the scoundrelly Valentine bringing about an engagement between Constance and Hugh by means of a misrepresented marriage announcement and a suppressed letter. Eventually, of course, everything is cleared up, the right pairs of turtle-doves are united, and the villain of the piece departs with characteristic jauntiness for Mexico—that Promised Land of scoundrels and swindlers. Mr. Carton has good reason to be grateful to the brilliant little band of actors, who have given life to his characters and something like an air of possibility to his slender but well-told story. Mr. Hare is faultless as Valentine Barbrook. Make-up, business, rapid alternations of sham *bonhomie* and hard, sharp, cruel villainy, sticking at nothing in the interests of self—all are admirable. The man lives. We feel that "we know that man" as we watch him hoodwinking his poor old mother, alternately bullying and cajoling his daughter, tricking the ingenuous young lovers, and scattering broadcast the seeds of misunderstanding and misery. Valentine Barbrook is an unpleasant creation, but none the less a brilliant one

from the critical standpoint. An excellent foil is found in Mr. Forbes Robertson's charming Hugh Rokeby, a rather idle fellow, but true to the core and with a great heart in his sleepy body. In the comedy scenes and when a note of pathos has to be struck Mr. Forbes Robertson is equally good, equally natural, and the impersonation is wholly pleasant from beginning to end. Mr. Sydney Brough is very frank and earnest as the manly young lover, Trevenen; Mr. Donald Robertson amusing as a rather conventional, sleek parson, the Rev. Borthwick Soundy; and Mr. Gilbert Hare gives a carefully finished sketch of Dr. Milner. The Grace Barbrook of Miss Rorke is a most tender and touching picture of a daughter torn by a divided duty, and with her life weighed down by the knowledge of her father's iniquities, and whether in her lighter moods or appealing for the sympathy of those who do not seem to understand the misery of her position, she is irresistible. Miss Rose Norreys is graceful and *piquante* as Constance; Miss Compton smart as the *mondaine*, Mrs. Bute Curzon, who has a host of bright things to say, and says them pointedly; and Mrs. Edmund Phelps looks and acts the good-natured, white-haired grandmother to the life.



Some Amateur Performances.

"THE CHOICE" AT HARTLEPOOL.

"Any heretofore unprinted occurrence which violates one of the ten commandments"—such is the definition of news in America supplied by one of her sons who is troubled with no ridiculous scruples as to "giving away" his native land—or, rather, his native press. 'Twill serve not inaptly as applied to that fearsome thing, the average amateur play. Points of difference:—The latter is not disposed to be too nicely critical as to the "occurrence" which constitutes the plot being "heretofore unprinted," and for choice it prefers the breach of as many commandments as can well be squeezed into the too, too narrow limits of a five-act drama. To the latter condition, however, Mr. Nicol McEwan proves himself a brilliant exception. He modestly contents himself with two acts, and shattered commandments are not—in boarding-school parlance—"made an especial feature." On the score of unoriginality he must, of a truth, be brought in guilty, but—let it be urged—with extenuating circumstances. Enoch Ardens are plentiful as blackberries, but Mr. McEwan's is not a mere parrot-cry. His story may lack novelty, but its treatment is unconventional. His argument may be unconvincing, but he proves himself a powerful and persuasive advocate. To conclude, what he has to tell he tells dramatically—together a cloak comprehensive enough to shroud graver faults than can be laid at his door. The gist of his story is Enoch Arden turned knave—an Enoch Arden who, having deserted his wife and child, returns after a lapse of years, and, finding the former "otherwise bespoken," mistakes the stirrings of dog-in-the-mangerism for a spirit of loyal love. That alleged love of Phil's is the nut which proves too tough for the ordinary tooth. His wife and child had been left to starve, but his love for them had never wavered! No, no; really this is a little "steep!" Janet herself seems to find it so. At any rate, she elects to remain with the man who has proved his truth. Phil receives his *congé*, and responds by dying on the threshold. This apparently is intended as a crowning proof of the truth of his assertion. The sceptical onlooker is left unconvinced. As large a query attaches to the reality of Phil's love as that which marked the hey-presto conversion of Beau Austin. Janet, however, proves more credulous, and is consumed with remorse. Phil's dead body is forthwith erected into a barrier between herself and Mark, and—taking

a leaf from the Scandinavian note-book—the curtains falls upon a catastrophic front door. Miss Constance McEwan, though scarcely strong enough to do justice to the woes of the tortured Janet, played with some force and more feeling. Power, though of a rugged and, as yet, almost wholly undeveloped description, was strongly apparent in the Mark of Mr. Elphinstone, but with such unpromising material as Phil, Mr. Hamilton Drew wrought to little purpose.

“GARRICK” BY THE CLAPHAM STROLLERS.

“So near, and yet so far”—or whatever may be the equine equivalent for that remark—fell in wistful accents from the horse as he resigned himself to the discovery that no gymnastic feat within his ken would lengthen his halter the six inches requisite to place his nose within a paradise of oats. As I sat watching Mr. C. W. Marshall's Davy, same words, same accents of lingering regret escaped me—“same sad look about ze mouse” (*vide* Carojac, the cut-throat) crept to my lips. How near, in point of actual strength, the actor came to realising the character, but how immeasurably far in every other respect! It was a study in pruning. There are characters which accommodate themselves, more or less with a good grace, to this treatment. But Davy is not one of these, and turns restive under the process. What seem but unimportant *et-ceteras* prove to be of vital interest to the part—no more to be dispensed with with impunity than was Antonio's pound of flesh. Shorn of his persuasive charm, his courtly mien, his “poleesh”—“the thousand graces that (from intimate acquaintance with the Criterion) we know so well”—the hero of romance becomes rather a dull fellow. We find that, after all, in those trifles light as air lay three-parts of his charm for us. Picture Charles I. stripped of Mr. Irving's right regal dignity—no, the bare idea partakes of the nature of nightmare—and yet Davy on a level of commonplace is in almost as sorry plight. Mr. Marshall did not reach that depth of ineptitude, be it said—in any case, he would be saved from that by sheer strength—but he sailed dangerously near the wind. He had set out to unfold a tale in plain, unvarnished fashion, and lo! the story would not bear it. The varnish suddenly developed into a matter of the first importance. A dogged determination to do or die saw Mr. Marshall through with his task—a certain desperate earnestness for which, whatever be his shortcomings, “yer can't 'elp loikin' 'im.” A lot of sound work and the second act strongly played went far towards reconciling one to his defects. So, after all, his ambition did not, like the hapless Antonio's (of Malfi fame) show too fearfully. But next time, please, we'll take it with the “poleesh.” Excellent support was lent by Mr. Colley Salter going for every atom of humour that could possibly be extracted from Gresham. Which remark, considerably modified, also applies to Mr. Rowney's Tallyhant. Useful assistance, too, was rendered by Mrs. Conyers d'Arcy, Mrs. Chamberlin, Mr. Pownall, and, with a real sense of character, by Mr. Morten Henry. A sweet voice and a manner of considerable charm stood Miss Elsie Dennis in good stead.

THE BANCROFTS' A.D.C. AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL.

“The Bancrofts are coming, hurrah, hurrah!”—not (more's the pity) the actual proprietors of the name, but the new-born club for which the kindly couple had consented to stand sponsors. The cry rang out, and spread through the length and breadth of London with the lightning-like rapidity of influenza, and with fully as disastrous effect upon the spirits of the hundred odd A.D.C.'s “that gem the city's (and suburbs') crown.” A blare of trumpets announced the approach of this latest rival. Rumour spoke loudly concerning its claims to distinction. Would the reality—like Solomon's riches (and wives)—exceed the report? The cry seemed imminent, “To your tents, O old stagers (taken in the generic sense, and therefore not in capitals), and look to it that ye do not find your laurels torn from your brows, and yourselves, like so many Lears, very literally out in the cold!” With bated breath they awaited the advent of these dreaded Davids—of Biblical, not Garrick repute. But their fears proved as groundless as the bogey scare of a hollow turnip with a phosphorescent light. The initial performance served to soothe their troubled breasts. Peace reigned again in the

amateur dramatic world. Reason no longer tottered on her throne. Their laurel wreaths sat upon the brows of the oldsters with as jaunty a carelessness as the simple sailor-hat, and the atmosphere of good-humoured indifference would not have disgraced the competitors for the Laureateship. As for the youngsters, they felt there was little need for trembling on the part of the weakest-kneed (a slip of the pen, for which I crave forgiveness). No one's heart was reduced to wax by jealousy "cruel as the grave." 'Cos why—there was not the slightest temptation towards a breach of the tenth commandment. The "Bancrofts" came, they stooped to conquer, but without "bonnie Kate's" success, and with disastrous results to poor old Oliver's comedy. "Eugene Aram" is dramatic as it well can be, but small trace of the dramatic clings to it when the scholar in the first standard has laboriously dissected it into syllables. And though "She Stoops" lends itself to almost any treatment, there is a limit even to her elasticity. Just two or three there were who did not put it too severely to the strain. Mr. Dawson-Milward is a Marlow not wholly *sans reproche*, but he has comprehension of the character. The shyness is excellent, and for the gallantry—well, it passes muster. The Hardcastle of Mr. Cahill is a little heavy, but it is sound comedy. A genuine sense of fun carries Miss E. Chester through Kate's bolder passages with marked success. Now comes the reverse of the shield, and that is all blame. In Mrs. Royal Dawson's hands Mrs. Hardcastle's broad humour becomes anæmic to the last degree. Tony Lumpkin was not sheepishly self-conscious as Mr. Cliff Keane would have us believe. Miss Kuhe, Mr. Wellesley Forbes, and Mr. Wyatt Teague help to complete a most nerveless background. But there, the "Bancrofts" will be giving us small credit for the charity that hopeth and believeth all things, which at this moment is dinning in our ears—and giving the lie direct to much previous experience—"that such things must be" ere a new club marches on to victory. Charity whispers loudly that though, like Dizzy, they may sit down worsted for the moment, maybe we shall hear them yet.

"SOCIETY" BY THE HAMPSTEAD A.D.C.

The Hampstead is a canny club. Its tactics display a sense of thrift which surely points to its moving spirit as hailing from beyond the border. No prodigal squandering of the "bawbees" in their case! They have a business-like objection to giving more than its value for any article, and no feeling of enthusiasm blinds them to what the actual worth may be. Hence the casting of "Society." With unerring insight they saw that here was no particular scope for artistic work. Their picked men pressed into the field would be practically thrown away; and that is altogether opposed to the policy of the club, so hey, presto, the picked men are swept aside, and the second division are submitted for inspection, and I take leave to applaud their prudence. Result: A play offering no particular difficulties is staged with a cast competent, if not conspicuous for its brilliance. Robertson's thread-bare satire on society—his views upon which seem, like Ouida's, to be evolved from the inner consciousness—was set forth in a simple, straightforward fashion of incalculable value to the play; and proving themselves *plus royaliste que le roi*, the players did their utmost to keep their work within the realm of comedy—a task which at moments the author has rendered of Herculean difficulty. Mr. Walther has considerable fire, and should prove a romantic actor of some value. His Daryl was boyish and impulsive, and not without a suggestion of force. Tom Stylus, who fatuously boggles the plot, was given by Mr. Martin Cahill with his customary strong sense of humour, but without his customary firm outline. Mr. Saltmarsh contributed a well-proportioned sketch of Old Chodd, and Mr. Brown was only a degree less successful with his son. Mr. Dornon was quaintly eccentric as the somniferous Ptarmigant, Mr. Rowney lavished detail upon Claudwrays, and Mr. Pownall was broadly effective as MacUsquebaugh. Miss Chester, always at home in character parts, reconciled contradictory points, and filled out my Lady Ptarmigant so that she was almost as difficult to recognise as one of Dr. Barnardo's gutter-urchins after six months' liberal diet. Miss Benjamin was stiff, but she knew her business. And a delicately-finished sketch was forthcoming from almost every one of the "Owls."

"THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW" BY THE LONDON AND WESTMINSTER BANK.

"Well, not to deceive you"—to adopt Mrs. Plornish's favourite commencement—the Bank performance was not on a level with that given just previously by the Strolling Players. Where the latter were strong they easily distanced their rivals, and where they were weak the Bank champions failed to "take the bounce out of them," for at the same points they were even weaker. But it was not an unrelieved tale of woe. There were few exceptions—so few, indeed, that they can be numbered on less than half the fingers of one hand. Mr. Gordon Taylor is as good a Stratton as amateurs can boast. He has not the weight or the pathos for the part, but he has firmness and sincerity, and each time he repeats his performance it gains in vigour and intensity. Very much the same might be said for Mrs. Frankish's Lilian. She is sweet, girlish, and natural, but she lacks the passion to grip the great scene. Miss Edith Garthorne is sufficiently amusing as Florence, but it is at the expense of the play, for she reads the part as low-comedy. Mr. Damer-Dawson is more discreet, but he too overbalances on the side of comedy. Miss Mary Stuart is refined and sympathetic as the gentle Aunt Fanny, and a wee morsel, by name Miss Mary Hersee, proves herself an admirable little actress. Mr. Carstairs is easy and fairly forcible as the Count, and Mr. Hersee has the right idea of Babbage, but the Westbrook of Mr. Padmore has little significance, and the Kenyon of Mr. Jeaffreson is absolutely valueless. Kenyons—amateur, I mean—are at a premium just now.

"IN HIS POWER" BY THE COMEDY CLUB.

Strong and stirring, not to say sensational (used in its most complimentary sense), this is one of those plays which doesn't give an audience a chance of snuggling down to a surreptitious snooze when the lights are low, as it not improbably would, if set down before one infinitely cleverer in construction and dialogue, but less remarkable for the incident with which Mark Quinton's drama bristles at every point. The average audience balances itself on the edge of its chair in a breathless condition throughout the desperate game of cat-and-mouse between the spy and the unhappy wife, and only leans back relieved when the former receives his just reward at the hands of his tool. But if situations of more than common strength are to be carried, it must be by actors more than common strong, and this the members of the Comedy are not. Mr. Martin Cahill certainly was the crafty, insidious foreigner we had expected him to be, and Scara in his hands became a striking personality, full of dramatic force. Mr. Robert Gilligan brings a quota of sincerity to his task which goes far to engage the sympathies of his audience, but he would, I fancy, be better fitted for the expression of powerful emotion by a preliminary course of Valentine's Meat Juice. Mrs. Ernest Renton, playing with tact, taste, and true feeling, was more successful with her effects, but only too palpably at the cost of considerable effort. Mr. Frank Hughes, too, was lacking in the same quality of force. Mr. George Leonard was the hen-pecked Walker, and with a little assistance from Mrs. Lofthouse, kept the ball rolling in capital style. Mr. Clark proved a solid, reliable doctor.

"THE HOBBY HORSE" BY THE IRVING CLUB.

From such a performance as that given by the Irvingites (dramatic, not sectarian), one comes away with a sense of personal injury. You are bidden to a dinner. That particular house is marked on the tablets of your memory as possessing a cook not unworthy the name. Experience has taught you that there you may look for excellent fare admirably served. Feeling that you are running no risk, you do not dream of pleading that prior engagement which at a pinch has often stood you in good stead. But lo, a change in the spirit of your dream! "Things is not as they used to was," as the poet sings, and she who was treasured in your memory for the sake of many a toothsome dish has resigned her position to a "general" whose intentions are beyond reproach, but whose culinary deeds are blacker than pen can paint. You sit through that dreary dinner wearing "a sorrow's crown of sorrow," which, as every child in the First Standard knows, is the tantalising recollection of "happier things." You

feel that your confidence has been betrayed in the basest fashion—that you have been lured to your undoing under circumstances of the most aggravated description, and you are proportionately aggrieved. And it is of just such an unpleasant surprise that the Irving Club has been guilty. Lured to St. George's Hall by the magic of a name, the fame of which is at any moment sufficient to conjure up a large and enthusiastic audience, one settled down in the comfortable conviction that one's dramatic palate was about to be delicately titillated. A glance at the programme revealed the absence of those names, "familiar in our mouth as household words," to which we had looked for the fit and proper setting of the brilliant gem they had taken into their keeping. Then Hope whispered her flattering tale—these younger members might sustain worthily, if not exactly gloriously, the reputation of their club! But Fate had scored a negative in large capitals against that soothing suggestion. There was destined to be no exhibition of rising talent, and the excellence of their material served but to swell the tale of woe. Even Pinero's scintillating wit became but dreary commonplace when filtered through the medium of inexperience or incompetence, and a nerveless, ill-conducted attack resulted in a defeat not many removes from a rout. Mr. Dawson Milward as the poverty-stricken East-End curate was better than the majority, but even he showed signs of timid grip. Mr. Rawson Buckley, too, and Miss Lilian Braithwaite played with unflagging energy, and were delightfully unaffected as the boy and girl lovers. Colonel Everett, an actor of considerable stamina, was altogether out of his element as the philanthropic devotee of the turf. He struggled desperately to get the humour over the footlights, but his struggles were too obvious to be crowned with success. Mr. Marsh was respectable as the lawyer, Pinching, and Messrs. Winthrop and Mannering acted with intelligence. Miss Morton was not exactly the acrid, thin-lipped Mrs. Porcher, but she had some conception of her. The remainder calls for the charitable cloak of silence.

"THE PARVENU" BY THE FORE STREET CLUB.

Do you remember that little anecdote—author, Mr. Gilead P. Beck—of the party over in Virginia City which had gathered to mourn a deceased friend. The gentleman who had undertaken the catering department of the entertainment had been entrusted with forty-one dollars to be laid out to the best advantage, and his account of the expenditure, as handed in to the chairman, stood:—

Whiskey	..	..	..	..	..	40 dollars
Bread	..	..	..	..	..	1 dollar.
Total						41 dollars.

"And what, in thunder," demanded the chairman, "made you waste all that money in bread?" (Which Mr. Besant turns with dexterous promptitude into a parallel for the niggardly patronage of literature in this country). I never sit through Godfrey's witty *exposé* of the aristocrat without thinking of the judicious expenditure of that Virginian, for the plot here bears the same relation to the play that the bread does to the whisky in his little account. It is but the merest thread upon which the author strings his merry and clever discourse upon the thousand frailties which we know so well to be underlying the thin social veneer—a discourse, judging from the packed houses which greet its every revival, of which we never weary. (Think of it, O ye divines, and ask yourselves for how many of your sermons can you say as much!) The author showers good things upon his characters with the prodigality of a Santa Claus, but he asks a good deal from them in return, and as far as the Fore Street company are concerned, he for the most part gets it. Mr. Major has few rivals in the character of Ledger. His humour is broad as ever, and when it is a question of pathos, he does not lose his hold on his audience. Mr. Rogers, always quaint and amusing, is light as a feather as Tracey. In Mr. Atthill's case, however, something had gone wrong with the starch, and he had but a limp apology to offer for the dignified Sir Fulke. And Miss Mary Stuart is too much the patrician, too little the tradesman's daughter. Mr. Willoughby is a little heavy for Claud, but he plays simply and earnestly, and therefore in a sense well. Miss Stalman makes a gentle Gwen, and Mrs. Findon a most mirthful Molly.



Notes of the Month.

IN view of the announcement that "Diplomacy" will shortly be revived at the Garrick, it may be presumed that "Robin Goodfellow" will have but a short run. While sympathising with Mr. Carton in his disappointment, we feel sure that it must be a great consolation to that gifted gentleman to know that his penultimate production is still running merrily at the St. James's, and beating the box-office record of that theatre. This latest venture of Mr. Alexander's is indeed a charming play, skilfully constructed and wittily written; yet we are certain that the author would be the first to admit how deeply he is indebted to Mr. Alexander himself for the success of the piece. And in this connection the question arises, has that gentleman's talents as a producer of plays received proper appreciative recognition? In hastily reviewing any new piece, one is apt to give credit to the author for the entire play as it is presented to us, and to the actors individually for their respective creations. Consequently, it is only when we consider Mr. Alexander's managerial career as a whole that the opinion is forced upon us that his own individuality has been clearly impressed upon every play produced at his theatre.

IN the first place the almost uniform success of his productions has clearly demonstrated, not only that he is an excellent judge of a play, but that he has the courage of his convictions. For, judging from the recent history of the St. James's, it would seem that if a play submitted to him appears to be promising, he will not be deterred from producing it by the comparative obscurity of the author. He discovered Mr. Wilde as a dramatist, and Mr. Aidé as a farce-writer; nor did he have reason to repent his adventurous spirit. It is true that a few—a very few—of his productions have failed to attract the public for a lengthened period, but let the following significant fact be borne in mind—that, during the whole of his managerial career, he has never had a single first night failure. This uniformity of success alone bears ample testimony to his skill and judgment. As regards his artistic influence over individual members of his company, will not a moment's reflection show that every actor at the St. James's who has been faithful to the management has advanced in public estimation by leaps and bounds? And are there not several ladies and gentlemen now serving under him who when they joined his company were comparatively unknown, but who at the present moment are in almost the front rank of the profession. In our issue of last month, Mr. Alexander came forward as the advocate of "Theatrical Apprenticeship," and moreover approved the suggestion of founding a School of Dramatic Art. We would, however, remind him that such a school is already in existence, and an excellent one it is; it is generally known as the St. James's Theatre.

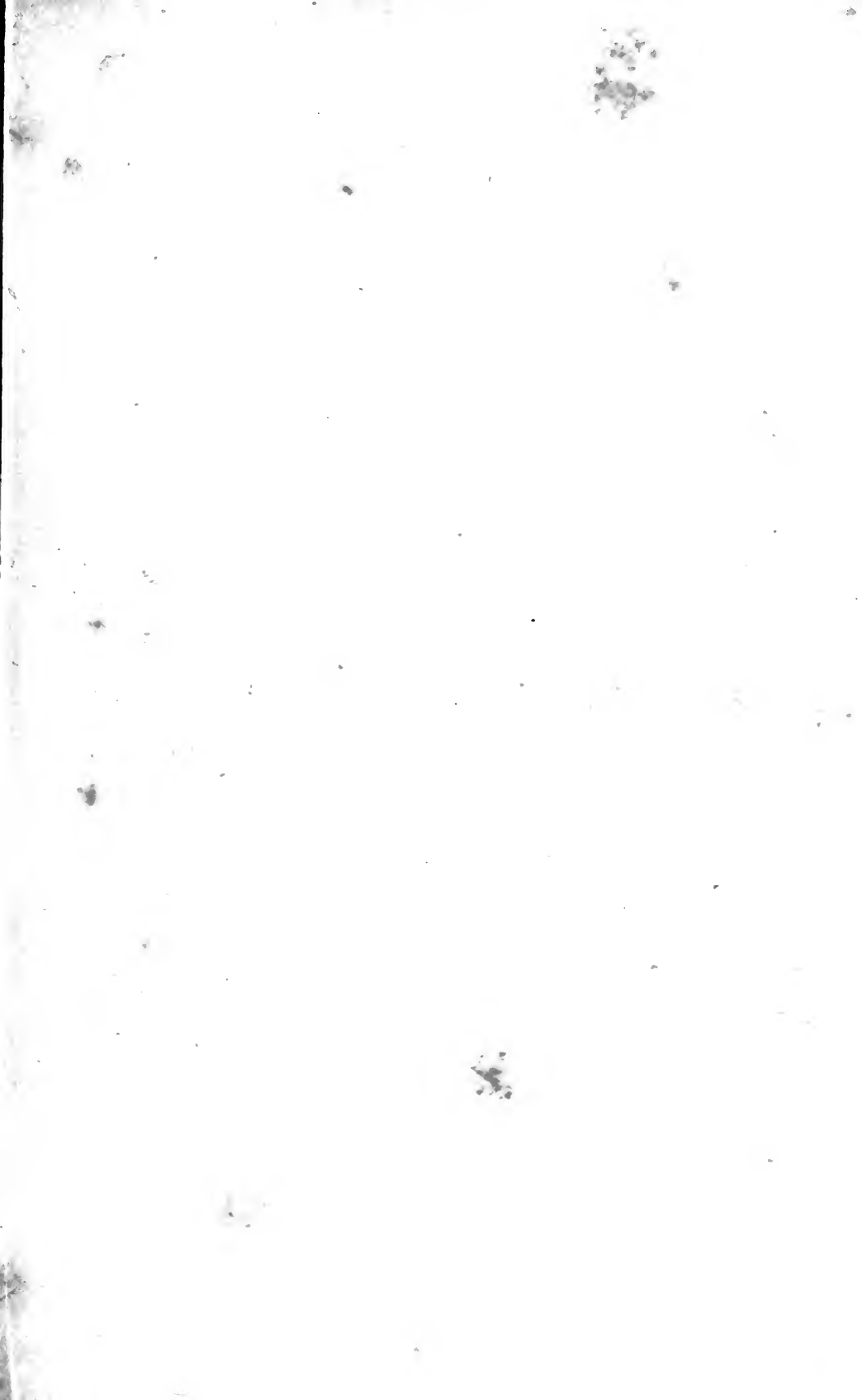
ALTHOUGH at the present moment we are suffering from a temporary theatrical depression, it must be admitted that the number of ordinary and habitual playgoers is very large, having increased

enormously during the last few years. A generation since, the keen students of the contemporary drama were a small and almost an isolated class ; but at this century-end the theatre (be it dramatic or "varietetic") is the popular amusement of the day. Whether the public at large flock to the play-house from pure love of acting, or merely to seek temporary relaxation from boredom, is an open question. At any rate, they come ; and what is more to the point, they pay. And not only do they fill the house, but they also display an eager interest in everything theatrical. Each newspaper has its weekly column of dramatic gossip ; the portraits of theatrical celebrities occupy the place of honour in photographers' shop-windows — Bishops and Cabinet Ministers being relegated to obscure corners — and the actor-manager is a great personage, the idol of the hour. But does the past history of the stage interest our modern playgoer ? What, for instance, is his general impression of the great Garrick ? Is it not that of a gentleman in appearance somewhat resembling Mr. Wyndham, who played Hamlet in a full-bottomed wig, and was a personal friend of Dr. Johnson ? That, and that only ! And as for the actors of the beginning of the century, how the mere mention of their names bores him ! For his grandfather, who is naturally a tedious person — we all know that reminiscent fogey — remembers Charles Kean ; and in intervals of gouty convalescence is prone to mention the circumstance with floods of irrelevant detail. No, your modern playgoer worships at the Temple of Irving ; Kembles, Keans, and Macreadys are dead gods ; let them rest in their graves ! To many such persons, therefore, the announcement of the death of Fanny Kemble will have come as a mild surprise. They doubtless imagined that she had been gathered to her fathers and her grandfathers years ago. They have a shadowy recollection that when the century was young she was a well-known actress of the "legitimate ;" that later on, in its middle life, she read Shakespeare to the loathers of the play-house ; and they will probably have a vague recollection that a few years since she, so to speak, threw mud upon her bread-and-butter by publishing in her *Memoirs* a bitter attack upon the Stage and all its works. The onslaught made some sensation at the time. The theatre was not over-popular just then, and the candid opinion of an actress upon the moral degradation of acting was a cause of gladness to the goody-goody people, and many an evangelical divine improved the occasion.

A SHORT time since Mr. J. T. Grein, either in involuntary obedience to the law that history repeats itself, or else inspired by a perusal of Miss Kemble's "*Memoirs*," imparted to the universe, as represented by the Playgoers' Club, his views on the Morality of Acting. He spoke, and the pulse of the world stood still for one brief moment — and then resumed its throbbing. Strange to say, it has been throbbing ever since, in spite of Mr. Grein. Certain persons maintain that all good acting is moral, and that it is only the bad that is immoral. But these theorists are manifestly triflers. To the serious soul, however, the question of the effect of simulated emotion upon character is absorbingly interesting. But there is one serious obstacle to the formation of a sound opinion — the absence of satisfactory data. This, happily or unhappily, is not an age of notorious evil living. Those of us who are vicious have acquired the knack of effectually veiling our evil tendencies. If we are conscienceless company promoters, we

become churchwardens, cultivate the acquaintance of missionaries, and sigh for the civilisation of the residuum. Or if, on the other hand, we have a strong desire to annex our fellow-subjects' property without going through the preliminary formula of tendering a pecuniary equivalent, we pose as patriotic opponents of a grinding oligarchy, anxious in the interests of humanity to abolish everything. In good sooth the outer crust is hard to penetrate. To the world at large members of the theatrical profession are just as decent in conduct as those of any other, say for instance, architects and surveyors (that mysterious calling!) And the actor cannot sin in secret, for as fierce a light beats upon the theatre as the Throne. Moreover any poor creature who has had a temporary coolness with the police, is entitled to describe herself as an "actress," whereas for a man to unlawfully style himself a "surveyor" is, we believe, an indictable offence. But the good fame of the actor does not convince the average scoffer. He merely shifts his ground. "His morality proves conclusively that he is a bad actor!" says he. From which we may assume conversely that, if he would become a good actor, he must cultivate evil-doing. But unhappily he has left off sack and lives cleanly; and at this point we must for the present leave him. Meantime he preserves his good reputation, and occasionally dines with a duke.

THERE is no doubt that, whatever the croakers may say to the contrary, the Drama has been breaking fresh ground in the last few years. In times past it was a well observed clause of the manager's creed that politics upon the Stage were an accursed thing; that the remotest political allusion, even if it should escape the blue pencil of the Reader, might place even a masterpiece in deadly peril. But those were the days of the thoroughly conventional play; when the world of the Drama was not the world of every-day life, but a region inhabited exclusively by impossible men and women—some impossibly good, others impossibly wicked—whose language was a strange tongue and whose manners were not of this world—nor any other. But latterly the Ozone of Reality has been in the air. It has not—saving the presence of Mr. Archer—been wafted from the North; it is distinctly a native product. It inspired Mr. Pinero, and he gave us "The Squire," when Ibsen was still an impenetrable iceberg, as yet unthawed by admiring translators; and it has given us since then a succession of great plays from the same master-hand which with their various types of character, all true, clear-cut as cameos, have shown us contemporary life as it is really lived, and, moreover, illuminated by the wit and invention of a genius. It was not likely that any traditional horror of the subject would prevent an original writer like Mr. Pinero from dealing sooner or later with what engrosses the thoughts and makes up the conversation of seven-eighths of the inhabitants of these islands; so after a tentative essay in "The Cabinet Minister," he boldly defied tradition, and plunged into the politics of the hour. Not only did he make the leading character in "The Times" a typical member of the predominant political party, but he also had the temerity to introduce a Home Rule Member in all his naked Hibernianism. And what was still more daring, the Parnellite—whose party is not spoilt by over popularity—was made to appear the more exemplary person of the two. Whether it was that the audience could not but recognise and appreciate the artistic truth of the character-studies, or that the





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MISS ESTELLE BURNEY.

"Pain for thy girdle and sorrow upon thy head,
This is the end of every man's desire."

—Swinburne.

"BALLAD OF BURDENS."



A GROUP FROM "LIBERTY HALL."

MR. GEO. ALEXANDER, Miss MARION TERRY, Mr. BEN WEBSTER, Miss MAUD MILLETT,
MR. EDWARD RUGHTON, Miss ALICE CRAIG, Mrs. A. HOLMES & Mr. V. H. VINCENT.

Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N.W.

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author had drawn them with such good taste and tact that they were void of all offence, but so it was that in a crowded house of representative first-nighters not a dissentient voice was raised, and the play was a great success.

WHERE the Master leads the disciple may follow. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has watched the balloon, and has found out which way the wind blows, and consequently a play of his entitled "The Bauble Shop," is announced for production at the Criterion—a play, which, judging from obviously inspired paragraphs, is almost exclusively political. An entire act, we learn, will pass within the precincts of the House of Commons, and Mr. Jones, it is mooted, has been studying "local colour" on the spot for months past. We only trust that the studies of that keen dramatic reformer will enable him to steer clear of that nebulous horror, Privilege. But whether or not Mr. Jones passes the rest of his life in the Clock Tower, it will still be very interesting to discover in what fashion the public will receive a play in which politics are not incidental, but, so far as we can gather, of the very essence of the piece. It will, most probably, depend upon the treatment, not of Mr. Jones, but of his subject.

MISS ESTELLE BURNEY, whose photograph embellishes our present number, is an actress who entered the profession less than two years ago, but entered it on one of the upper stories, whence she has not descended. She made her *début* in London, in June, 1891, at the Avenue Theatre, taking the part of Jeanne in Miss Geneviève Ward's *matinée* production of an English version of George Ohnet's "Serge Panine," in which she immediately achieved a very striking success—taking the house by storm, in one scene, as was remarked in the notice of the performance of the play in the July, 1891, THEATRE, when a great future was prognosticated for her. Her next appearance was at the Criterion, when Messrs. F. C. Philips and Percy Fendall's play, "Margaret Byng," was produced at a *matinée* on December 8th, 1891, Miss Burney playing the title *rôle* with power. She then took Mrs. P. Campbell's part in "The Trumpet Call" at the Adelphi for a time, during that lady's absence through indisposition; and on April 19th of last year appeared as Rebecca West in "Beata," Mr. Austin Fryer's adaptation of Ibsen's "Rosmer of Rosmersholm"—a part of supreme difficulty, in which, nevertheless, she elicited much commendation even from those who condemned the play. Miss Burney then made an essay at management, and though her first venture, with "The Awakening" at the Garrick, did not achieve an encouraging success, she had the "grit" to try again; and with "David," at the same theatre, she made an undoubted hit in her capacity of manager, while in Mr. Justin H. McCarthy's "A Caprice," which she afterwards produced as a curtain raiser to the drama, she made an even greater hit as an actress.—Our second photograph is a group of characters from Mr. R. C. Carton's play "Liberty Hall," containing portraits of most of the cast of that successful production now running at the St. James's Theatre.

As amongst persons of all the other professions, and of every rank in life, Montagu Williams, whose death we have to deplore since our last issue, had many admiring friends amongst actors; and was one of the most popular members of the Garrick Club. He was himself in his early days an actor, and always looked back with the greatest

pleasure on his experiences "on the boards." He married Miss Keeley, in whose father's company he had his first engagement, and doubtless found his acquisition of the principles of dramatic art of the greatest value to him in after years when at the Bar. Few men who have ever lived have left behind them when they died so large a number of sincere mourners as the humane police magistrate, who was able at the same time to be a "beak" and to be regarded by the habitual criminal with something very like affection. Even the man who had "got three months' hard" from him still felt no bitterness against "Monty," whom he knew that it had hurt almost as much to order it as himself to have to undergo it. To have made this attitude of mind on the part of one of the criminal classes possible, and even if only in an occasional instance, was to have spent a life to good purpose.



New Plays

PRODUCED AND IMPORTANT REVIVALS in London, from December 16th, 1892, to January 19th, 1893 :—

(*Revivals are marked thus **)

- Dec. 19 "Midnight ; or, The Bells of Notre Dame," drama, in four acts, by Arthur Shirley and Benjamin Landeck. Surrey.
- " 19 "A Woman's Vengeance," duologue, in one act, by Clara Savile-Clarke. *Matinée*. St. George's Hall.
- " 21 "Charley's Aunt," comedy, in three acts, by Brandon Thomas. (First time in London.) Royalty.
- " 21 "A Love Game," comedietta, in one act, by Walter Browne. Royalty.
- " 22 "Trooper Clairette," musical farcical comedy, in three acts, adapted from the French of H. Raymond and A. Mars by Charles Fawcett, music by Victor Roger. Opera Comique.
- " 22 "The Lost Paradise," play, in three acts, adapted from the German of Ludwig Fulda by Henry C. De Mille. Adelphi.
- " 24 "Boys and Girls," sketch by Corney Grain. St. George's Hall.
- " 24 "Little Red Riding Hood," pantomime, by William Muskerrey, music by A. Sharp. Marylebone.
- " 26 "Eagle Joe," drama, in four acts, by Henry Herman. Princess's.
- " 26 "Little Bo-Peep, Little Red Riding Hood, and Hop o' My Thumb," pantomime, by Sir Augustus Harris and Wilton Jones. Drury Lane.
- " 26 "The Naughty Forty Thieves," pantomime, by Geoffrey Thorne, music by W. H. Brinkworth. Grand.
- " 26 "Puss in Boots," pantomime, by George Conquest and Henry Spry, music by George Le Brunn and George Phillips. Surrey.
- " 26 "The Jockey Club," farcical equestrian sketch, by George Sanger. Sanger's Amphitheatre.
- " 26 "Cinderella," pantomime, by Fred Locke, music by C. S. Parker and J. Tabrar. Pavilion.

- Dec. 26 "The Sleeping Beauty, and the Mystic Yellow Dwarf," pantomime, by Walter Walton, music by T. P. Fish. Parkhurst.
- " 26 "The Man in the Moon," pantomime, by J. Addison. Britannia.
- " 26 "Dick Whittington," pantomime, by Horace Lennard, music by Oscar Barrett. New Olympic.
- Jan. 2 "Hypatia," play, in four acts, founded on Charles Kingsley's novel by G. Stuart Ogilvy. Haymarket.
- " 5 "Robin Goodfellow," play, in three acts, by R. C. Carton. Garrick.
- " 6 "In Three Volumes," comedietta, in one act, by Arthur Law. Prince of Wales's.
- " 7^o "A White Lie," comedy, in four acts, by Sydney Grundy. Avenue.
- " 9^o "Kerry," play, in one act, by Dion Boucicault. Terry's.
- " 9^o "The Churchwarden," farcical comedy, in three acts, adapted from the German, by Edward Terry. Terry's.
- " 12 "A Day Will Come," drama, in four acts, by W. J. Mackay. Sadler's Wells.
- " 14 "La Rosière," comic opera, in three acts, by Harry Monkhouse, composed by E. Jakobowski. Shaftesbury.
- " 19 "The Magic Opal," light opera, in two acts, by Arthur Law, composed by Senor Albeniz. Lyric.

In the Provinces, from December 13th, 1892, to January 9th, 1893:—

- Dec. 15 "£1,000 Reward," drama, in a prologue and three acts, by Charles Rogers. (For copyright purposes.) Aquarium, Scarborough.
- " 16 "Bungles," comedy, in three acts, by A. de Svertchkoff and Harry Morphew. Lyric Hall, Ealing.
- " 19 "Red and Blue," farcical comedy, in three acts, by Fred. Fanshaw. T.R., Wolverhampton.
- " 19 "The King's Cure," comic opera, in three acts, by the Rev. J. H. Turner. T.R., Warrington.
- " 19 "The Slums of London," drama, in four acts, by Charles A. Adlin. Grainger, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- " 19 "Baby's Engagement," comedietta, in one act, by Robert Rogers. T.R., Wolverhampton.
- " 24 "Babes in the Wood, and the Bold Robin Hood," pantomime, by Horace Lennard. Crystal Palace, Sydenham.
- " 24 "Baby," farce, in one act, by J. E. Cowell. Pier Pavilion, Eastbourne.
- " 26 "The Eagle's Wing," comic opera, in two acts, by Charles Riminton, music by Robert Forsyth. Pier, Folkestone.
- " 26 "The Isle of Utopia," extravaganza, by Charles Nugent. Devonshire Park, Eastbourne.
- " 26 "The Wheel of Time," drama, by Sidney Barrington. T.R., West Bromwich.
- " 26 "The Indian Mutiny," drama, in four acts, by George Daventry. Gaiety Theatre, Burnley.
- " 27 "Sarah," farcical comedy, in three acts, by Fred. Jarman. T.R., Waterford.
- " 30 "The Silly Season," farcical comedy, in three acts, by George Lash Gordon and Branstons Nash. (For copyright purposes.) Athenæum Hall, Shepherd's Bush.
- " 31 "Mérofède," play, in four acts, by George Cunningham. T.R., Preston.
- Jan. 2 "A Marked Man," drama, in four acts, by J. James Hewson. T.R., Colchester.
- " 2 "The Prophet," farcical comedy, in three acts, by Eden E. Greville. Grand Hall, Maidenhead.
- " 2 "My Landlady's Daughter," comedietta, in one act, by Paul M. Berton. Grand Hall, Maidenhead.
- " 2 "Sydney Carton," play, in a prologue and four acts, founded on Dickens' novel "A Tale of Two Cities," by T. Edgar Pemberton. T.R., Norwich.
- " 2 "Love in a Mist," masque, by Louis N. Parker. Devonshire Park, Eastbourne.

- Jan. 9 "A Lady by Birth," comedietta, in one act, by W. Gordon Smythies. T.R., Cardiff.
 „ 9 "Mad; or, Back to Life," drama, in four acts, by W. H. Dearlove. T.R., Goole.

In Paris, from December 9th, 1892, to January 17th, 1893 :—

- Dec. 10 "L'Elève," piece in three tableaux, by Albert Faure and Michel Nour. Théâtre d'Application.
 Jan. 10 "Au Dahomey," spectacular piece, in five acts, by MM. Oswald Gugenheim and Le Faure. Porte St. Martin.
 „ 15 "La Souricière," comedy, in three acts, by Alexandre Bisson and Albert Carré. Variétés.
 „ 16 "La Dame de la Mer," adapted from the Norse of Ibsen, by MM. Chenevière and Johansen. Théâtre Moderne.
 „ 17 "Miss Robinson," piece, in three acts, by Paul Ferrier, music by Louis Varney. Folies-Dramatiques.
 „ 19 "Charles Demailly," play, in four acts, founded on a novel of MM. Edmond and Goncourt, by Paul Alexis and Oscar Méténier. Gymnase.
 „ 22 "Lysistrata," piece, in four acts and a prologue, by Maurice Donnay, music by A. Dutacq. Grand Théâtre.
 „ 22 "Gens de Bien," comedy, in three acts, by Maurice Denier. *Matinée*. Vaudeville.
 „ 30 "Tararaboum-Revue," revue, in a prologue and four acts, by Paul Ferrier and Alfred Delilia. Menus-Plaisirs.
 Jan. 16 "Mademoiselle Julie," tragedy, in one act, translated from the Swedish of A. Strindberg by M. De Casanove. (For the Théâtre Libre.) Menus-Plaisirs.
 „ 16 "Werther," lyrical drama, in four acts, by E. Blau, P. Milliet, and G. Hartmann, music by Jules Massenet. Opéra-Comique.
 „ 17 "Tout pour L'Honneur," play, in four acts, by Hugues Le Roux. Gymnase.





James
M. Robertson

THE LATE T. W. ROBERTSON.

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THE THEATRE.

MARCH, 1893.

The Life of T. W. Robertson.*



HE author of this interesting volume of memoirs thinks it necessary to preface his genial and sympathetic Life of the author of "Caste" with an elaborate apology for book-making. This apology seems a little misplaced in a work of this kind, which is avowedly no more than a judicious and appreciative selection from existing material. In fact the more the writer, be he author, editor, or compiler, keeps himself in the background the better. What the reader mainly requires is an intimate acquaintance with, and a nice and just appreciation of, his subject, tempered by a due sense of proportion, and what for want of a better word, may be called literary perspective. If a biographer be well equipped with these essential qualifications, we are not inclined to quarrel with him for being a book-maker.

In fact we are unfeignedly thankful that this Life has been so little "edited." Of late the craze for editing not only Lives and Memoirs, but even the writings of great authors, has obtained to a ridiculous extent. Some enterprising publisher or other is continually bringing out a new edition of the works of one of our great classics—at present the craze seems to be for Scott, Thackeray, and Jane Austen—and entrusting the illustrious dead to the tender mercies of some so-called editor, whose name on the title-page is often in larger type than the author he is good enough to edit. The "editing" usually consists in "crossing the t's" and "dotting the i's" of the author, or calling attention to one or two clerical errors as obvious as they are trivial. Or perchance the editor dabbles in bibliography; and then a fictitious air of erudition is given by a long list of "*variorum* readings."

However, in the book before us the editing is in the main judicious and unobtrusive. It is true we hear a little too much of the Robert-

* "The Life and Writings of T. W. Robertson." By T. Edgar Pemberton. London: R. Bentley & Son, New Burlington Street, W.

sons' forbears, and the first chapter is rather devoid of interest to the lay reader. The struggles of the elder Robertson to carry on the declining Lincoln circuit are well described. The gradual growth of railways during the decade of 1840-50, and the consequent facilities afforded to the inhabitants of the country towns to visit the metropolis destroyed the comparative isolation of provincial cities, and this centralising tendency proved fatal to the time-honoured system of circuits and stock companies. Local attractions naturally could not cope any longer with those of the metropolis, and a succession of bad seasons compelled Mr. Robertson, the father of the dramatist, to disband the members of the historical Lincoln circuit.

In 1850, then, we see T. W. Robertson trying to earn a living in London. His struggles with fortune lasted several years, and were endured by him with inexpressible cheerfulness, and carried on with indomitable pluck. How useful these lower-life experiences were in after years we shall see. The well-known lines ending "They learn in suffering what they teach in song," apply even less to the poet than to the playwright, who has to depict human emotions and interests and is the prophet of the real rather than of the ideal.

After many attempts the persevering young playwright, who was then barely twenty-two, induced Mr. William Farren, then manager of the Olympic, to accept a "comic drama," or, as we should call it, a farce, entitled "A Night's Adventure." It was produced in August, 1851, and unfortunately proved a failure. Robertson's disappointment found vent in a somewhat crushing retort to the irate manager. Farren disgusted with the failure roundly declared to the chagrined author that "it was a d—d bad play." Whereupon the undaunted dramatist promptly retorted that "the play was not as bad as the acting."

Between 1851 and 1854 we have no record of any original play by Robertson, though he did a great deal of translating and adapting at this period. Though these adaptations from the French commanded a certain sale, they can hardly be said to have been very remunerative. We hear of Robertson formally assigning all rights in one of these comediettas for the munificent sum of £3. Mr. Pemberton's account of Robertson's first essay in the rôle of Public Entertainer must be given in his own words. The speculation, it seems, was undertaken jointly with his friend and brother dramatist H. J. Byron. They had engaged a room at the Gallery of Illustration in Regent Street, well known as the home of the German Reed's Entertainment. The first performance was "billed" for eight o'clock—money for the posters and other incidental expenses having been lent by a friend, for the sanguine pair started without a penny of their own—but at ten minutes past eight there was no sign of an audience:—

"At last a gentleman tendered a sovereign at the box-office, and asked if any front seats were left. 'Oh, yes,' replied Robertson, pleasantly, 'both right and left.' The gentleman entered the empty room, and Robertson rushed out to get change. Meanwhile the dejected Byron was peeping through the curtain in an agony of nervousness. The entertainer, nothing daunted by the paucity of the audience, decided to give the

show in its entirety. The first portion was to be a monologue called 'The Origin of Man.' The introductory patter was fatally *à propos* and ominous. Byron, looking fixedly at the solitary occupant of the house, commenced as follows: 'In the beginning there was only one man.' 'Yes,' interrupted the house, 'and I'm the d—d fool,' and hurrying out to Robertson he demanded his money back, and said that he had come to see the Chinese."

It appears that in another room of the Gallery of Illustration some Chinese jugglers were giving a performance, and that a stray lamb had wandered into the wrong fold.

The ill-luck that pursued T. W. Robertson from 1851 to 1854 appears to have reached a climax in the latter year, and we find the unappreciated actor and playwright contemplating following the example of other eminent writers, Sir Richard Steele and Coleridge, and actually presenting himself for enlistment at the Horse Guards. Fortunately for the English stage the reduced dramatist was not accepted by the military authorities.

It was about this time he wrote the unequal, but pleasing little comedy, "Over the Way," which is worth noticing here, as it has recently been produced at the Court Theatre, being admirably adapted for the "Triple Bill," a programme now in vogue.

The Prince of Wales' Theatre, so closely associated with the name of T. W. Robertson, was the scene of his brilliant triumphs. This play-house had many vicissitudes of fortune, and not to mention the uncomplimentary nickname of the Dusthole, it was christened in turn the Regency, Dilettanti, Tottenham Street, and Fitzroy, and now the last stage in its changeful history has been reached in its conversion into one of the strongholds of the Salvation Army.

In 1858 we find Robertson, who had become popular as an actor, deciding to give up acting altogether, and, in short, to use literature not as a staff but as a crutch. One reason for "burning his boats" was the conviction that a roving life gave no continuous leisure for the serious work of writing plays. Besides, the life of an actor was at no time congenial. Acting was always with him "collar work." His acting days, as he once forcibly put it, "were those days when I had one meal a day, and three parts a night to play; now I have three meals a day, and no part to play; and for this relief Providence has my heart-felt thanks."

There is an amusing story, too, he was fond of telling against himself which, though it shows how great was his innate courtesy and good nature, at the same time makes it clear that he was not well adapted for the rough-and-ready life of a travelling actor. One day seeing "Apartments to Let" written up in the window of a house in a town where his company was performing, he interviewed the landlady with a view to coming to terms. The price was higher than he could pay, and the poor fellow was puzzled how to beat a graceful retreat. He had praised everything, and at last seeing no other way out he said to the eager landlady—who no doubt thought she had landed a highly desirable tenant—

"You must excuse the question—how about the coach-house?" 'The coach-house? We haven't got a coach-house!' was the reply. 'Dear me! then I am ex-

trremely sorry,' said Robertson. 'As far as the rooms are concerned they would have suited me admirably; but I always find a coach-house indispensable.'

Mr. Pemberton recounts a characteristic and humorous little episode of his early struggling days which gives us an insight into the genuine good-heartedness and unselfishness of the author of "Caste." While touring in the provinces he was introduced to two young actresses, or, to speak by the book, two young entertainers. Wishing to be useful to them he used to take them for walks to the places of interest in the neighbourhood. Suddenly his visits ceased, and he was seen no more. Many years afterwards they met again, and Robertson explained the reason of his strange behaviour. It appeared that at that period his people at home were much pressed for money. Young Robertson did not hesitate to sell all his little valuables, together with his presentable clothes, leaving himself with but one shabby suit, and sent the proceeds to his struggling family. He did not think his poor worn suit good enough for his two young friends, and naturally felt reluctant to show signs of his poverty.

The first real success of Robertson was "Garrick"—a play written to order, and avowedly "built round," so to speak, the personality of Sothorn. The payment received for the play, which is still one of the few modern comedies which may be considered a "safe draw" for a revival, was £50—quite a large sum in those days. This comedy was followed by another play—written expressly to suit Sothorn's style of acting—the ever popular "Society."

Buckstone's critical acumen was rather at fault in his judgment of this comedy, which he roundly stigmatised as "rubbish." The poor author was rather sore at the great comedian's terse and uncompromising verdict. It appeared, too, that others held the same opinion.

"One day a friend met him in the Strand, a brown paper parcel in his hand, his head aloft, teeth grinding, nostrils dilated, and eyes aflame. 'What's the matter, Robertson?' he asked, 'is the house on fire?' 'No, but I am!' was the reply. 'I've just been reading this play—a splendid play, a magnificent play—to Sefton Parry. What do you think he said? He said it was rot, and what do you think I said?' 'Can't guess.' 'I told him that until that moment I was in doubt as to whether the play was a good one or not; but now that he had pronounced it to be a bad one, my assured conviction that he was an idiot had convinced me that the play was a good one!'"

The point of the little anecdote is given by the sequel, for "Society" was an assured success on the first night, and soon become the talk of the town. With this play Robertson inaugurated a new school of dramatic art, and this and subsequent comedies did a good deal to kill the artificial conventional comedy of the old school.

His next play, "Ours," was the first of the famous monosyllabic cycle of comedies. As all the world knows this series restored the fortunes of the Prince of Wales' Theatre.

It is, however, on "Caste" that Robertson's fame as a dramatist will mainly depend. It is now regarded as a stage classic; and just as Hood's epitaph was "He sang the Song of the Shirt" so will Robertson be known to future generations as the author of "Caste."

Sachs. One friend and propher me.
I am unpoor and lucky.
Once the master of a shop
I am now by the pressure
of circumstances over which I
have no control driven
to seek work and not to find
it. Poverty is a dreadful -
thing, sir, for a man as has
once been well off.

~~Griff. I dare say.~~
~~Griff. Poverty contract a noble~~
~~kind of small is a sad thing~~
~~and to be hard up~~

Griff. I dare say indeed that
Sachs. Sighing ah. Sir, the poor
and lucky is often hardly used.
What chance has the working
man?

Hart. None at all. When he does
work.

Sachs. I am sorry, gentlemen, that
I cannot offer you any refreshments,
but luxury and me has
long been strangers.

Robertson was painfully nervous on the first night of any of his productions, as the following anecdote shows :—

"Early in the performance an excitable but well-meaning friend came up suddenly and by way of hearty congratulation clapped the highly-strung playwright on the shoulder, which quite unnerved him. When the play was over, and success assured, Robertson told his friend the story of the man who for a wager carried a chest of oranges on his head from Botolph Lane to Covent Garden. The poor wretch was killed by a 'pal' who by way of congratulation gave him a slap on the over-weighted spine—and broke it. Robertson insisted that his friend's felicitations, coming so near his triumph, came almost as a death-blow to it and him."

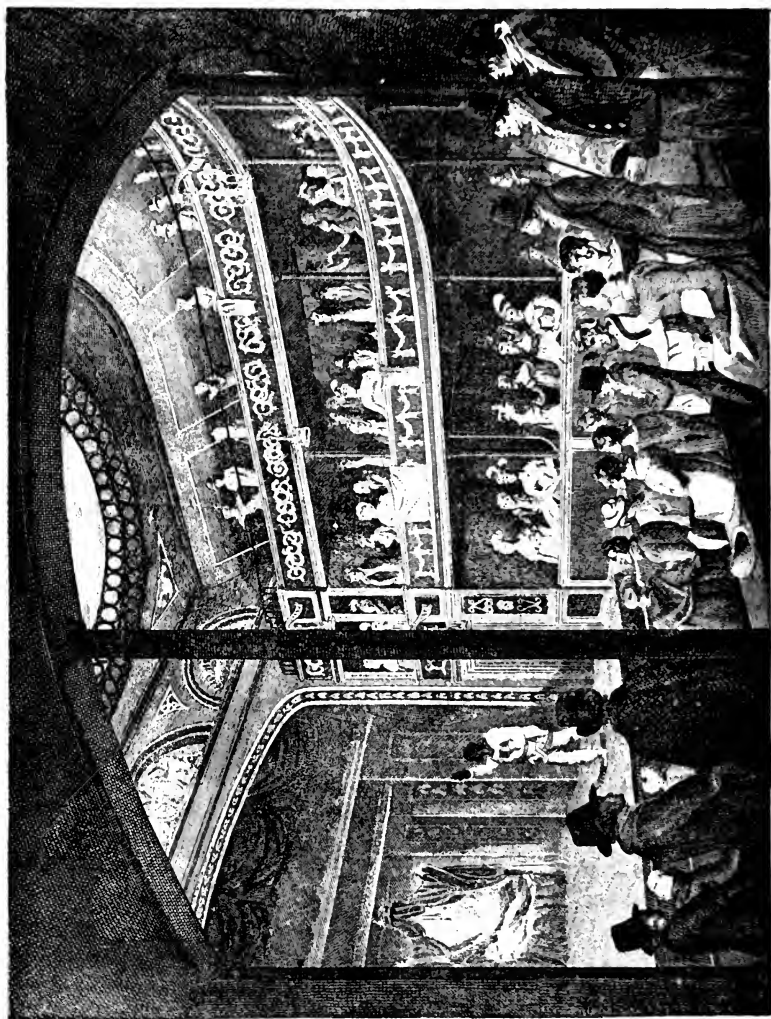
Mr. Pemberton quotes an item of correspondence of peculiar interest at the present day, when we hear so much about the moral obligations of publishers to authors of successful books. After the revival of "Ours" in 1870, Mr. Bancroft generously offered Robertson an increase in the fees which had been agreed upon. His reply was as follows :—

"Don't be offended that I return your cheque. I recognise your kindness and intention to the full; but, having thought the matter over, I cannot reconcile it to my sense of justice and probity to take more than I bargained for. An arrangement is an arrangement and cannot be played fast and loose with. If a man, say an author, goes in for a certain sum he must be content with it, 'and seek no new'; if he goes in for a share, he must take good and bad luck too. So please let "Ours" be paid for at the sum originally agreed on."

It is curious to compare the royalties now paid for plays with those Robertson received for his. For "Society" he was paid but £1 a night, for "Ours" £2, while even for "Caste," the one great comedy of that decade, he only received what would now be considered the beggarly honorarium of £3—about half the royalty that would now be paid to a rising dramatist for a successful *lever-du-rideau*.

In the last years of his life Robertson was inundated with commissions, and his busy pen was never idle. Some of these plays written to order were, it must be confessed, certainly failures, notably a play called "The Nightingale" written for Benjamin Webster. This was an attempt at realistic melodrama, and in plays of this description Robertson's light touch and delicate fancy were thrown away. Robertson was deplorably sensitive to adverse criticism, and the severe strictures passed on this play told severely upon him, at that time suffering from incipient heart disease—the malady which was so soon to prove fatal to him. Keats is erroneously, though popularly, said to have been killed by a review in the *Quarterly*, and with truth it may be said that a harsh and malevolent criticism on his play "M.P." hastened poor Robertson's end. The story is graphically and feelingly told by Mr. Pemberton. On the day following the first performance of "M.P." a friend came to read to the invalid the newspaper criticisms. Anxious not to give pain, the friend considerably omitted one cruelly hostile and bitter critique, but Robertson insisted, and the friend reluctantly read the unjustifiable and unpardonably severe notice.

"Before finishing he paused, and glancing at Robertson, saw his head droop; and as he turned to find a handkerchief, a single drop of blood fell upon the newspaper that lay on his knees. All the pleasure that he had derived from the encomiums of



INTERIOR OF THE REGENCY THEATRE, AFTERWARDS PRINCE OF WALES' THEATRE.
Built on the site of the King's Concert Rooms.

those who were qualified to judge, and impartially review his work, was wiped away by this one malicious attack. His friend, who describes this sick-room scene as being at once painful and dramatic, was asked in later days to help this 'critic' in an hour of need. 'No,' he said, buttoning up his pockets. 'Robertson was dying and the man knew it. I cannot forget that drop of blood!'

The courage and affection of T. W. Robertson are pathetically manifested in the serio-comic letters to his wife written literally from a sick-bed, and when he was virtually given up by the doctors :—

"Here I am! The Imperial [Torquay] was full, and wouldn't have me, so I came here. It is very comfortable, but we have a wretched day. In your reply to this, let me know how you are; and Maud, and Tommy, and the Baby. It seems years since I left London. Of course I have no news. Has the Baby expressed any opinion as to my absence? Did you give the two children the half-crowns I promised them? *Hayland* [his man] *is going to have his hair cut*. I am very hungry. Torquay is in Devonshire. I think I shall be very dreary to-morrow. God bless you all!"

Then another, at once pathetic, humorous, and affectionate, written two days later :—

"My first letter this year is addressed to you. I have not been so well since this morning. It is now 3 p.m. I think I am going through the process of acclimatization. The weather is warmer, but a little foggy, but nothing like London fogs. *Hayland has had his hair cut*. You cannot conceive the desolation of my life here. I see no one—have spoken to no one. It seems to me that I am in a lighthouse and alone. Please send me the *Era*, when you get it to-morrow. Kiss my darling baby for me, and my dear Maud, and Tommy when you see him. I don't know that I have anything more to tell you, *except that Hayland has had his hair cut*."

Then, again, in a letter dated the day after, we see the thoughtful consideration that Robertson had for his children's pleasure, which incidentally gives the reader an insight into the lovable character of the famous dramatist. The great charm and interest in these letters are their perfect naturalness and spontaneousness. They are not written with a view to publication, as those of Dickens and many other famous letter-writers undeniably were :—

"The weather has changed. It is mild and raining, so that I cannot get out again to-day. I want you to go to a Morning Performance of a Pantomime, taking with you Tommy and Maud. *You must pay for your seats*. The children ought to see a pantomime once at Christmas. I find that our income last year (1870) was £3,760, not counting about £200 due on the year. This is about £500 less than the year before."

A few days after this letter was written poor Robertson, hardly benefited at all by his stay at Torquay, returned to London. A curious incident in connection with his arrival should not escape the notice of the correspondents who send the miraculous dog stories to the *Spectator*, and indeed its ominous significance should commend it to the consideration of the Society for Psychical Research. It was well known that on the first night of "Society," "Ours," and "Caste" a strange dog on each occasion followed Robertson home. On Robertson's arrival at home after this Torquay visit it was found that a strange dog had followed the brougham all the way from the station. Nothing would induce it to enter the house, but it stayed in the front garden, howling and declining all food.

Robertson's end is touchingly described by Mr. Pemberton. The last of his great cycle of monosyllabic comedies, "War," had just

been produced. The first night's verdict was decidedly unfavourable, and this news, in spite of the care of friends, reached the unhappy author on his sick-bed. It was told him, in all innocence, by his boy Tommy :—

"After hearing it all, he lay back on his pillow and said with a sigh: 'Ah, Tommy, my boy, they wouldn't have been so hard if they could see me now. I shan't trouble them again.' And then, with a look of mingled sorrow and affection, he took the boy's hand in his and was silent for a few moments, whilst tears trickled down the faces of both."

A little more than a fortnight elapsed when, at half-past five o'clock on February 3rd, 1871, the author of "Caste" peacefully passed away. On the same evening "War" was played for the last time.



Dramatic Dangers in the Past.



WITH the sea-serpent, the abnormal gooseberry, and all the other ludicrous curiosities of natural and unnatural history which put in a periodical appearance, should be included those regular visitants—the worthy but misguided folks who habitually disparage the theatrical profession and all who in its ranks earn their daily bread. Unfortunately the social pests who devote their time and energies to the congenial task of throwing mud at the stage do not emulate the example of certain alleged angelic beings, and confine themselves to occasional visits. One wishes it were so, for it might then be possible to bear with them. Like the poor, they are always with us; like the tax-collector, they have a habit of appearing at inconvenient moments. When least expected these acidulated croakers and jaundiced carpers pop up and state, with an assumption of erudite wisdom which doubtless carries a conviction of truth to many, that the actor of to-day is a person of no account. They compare him—to his disadvantage, of course—with the bright particular stars, long since dead and turned to clay, whose names and dramatic achievements are writ large in the history of the English stage. And in all this the lay critics receive support and corroboration at the hands of our familiar friend, the venerable actor, who in his time has played many parts—all equally villainously—and who, for painfully obvious reasons is now unable to obtain a hearing.

This hoary-headed relic whispers with confiding hoarseness that “the drama is going to the dogs,” and that the conditions under which the modern actor lives and moves and has his being, are vastly inferior to those which surrounded his predecessors during the performance of similar operations. These are old stories, told and retold until we know them by heart. They doubtless made our grandfathers laugh; they cause a smile to come to the lips even in these days of dreariness and depression; and the probability is that they will amuse our children’s children in the years that are to come. The drama, like most other things, has, indeed, been going to the dogs for several centuries, but the painful catastrophe has been thus far mercifully averted, and from the present appearance of affairs there is no imminent danger of it happening. On the contrary, as one year follows another into the past the theatre rises a step higher in the estimation of all reasonable men, and at the same time the actor follows suit. To refute these assertions is not diffi-

cult. A profound study of the history of the stage and of those who have adorned it is by no means needed to convince one that, in quite a variety of ways, the old-time actor had a very disagreeable and often perilous time of it, not only whilst engaged in the public performance of his art, but also as a private individual.

Take, for instance, what may be called the official persecution which, on the slightest and slenderest pretext, was at one time directed against the play-house and the players.

The Long Parliament in 1647 swept away the theatre, root and branch, and crushed the actors. In the crushing they split no hairs, nor indulged in nice equivoque. It was openly proclaimed that the harmless devotees of Thespis and Melpomene were "proud parrotting players—a sort of superbiuous ruffians, and because sometimes the asses are clothed in lions' skins, the dolts imagine themselves somebody and walk in as great state as Cæsar"; and any actor caught playing was publicly whipped. Some of the bad actors of the time may have deserved this recognition of their want of talent, but it was certainly drastic treatment to tar the whole profession with the same brush. We are told, too, that even when an actor had honourably surrendered himself in battle his chivalrous opponent welcomed him with the polite salutation, "Cursed be he who doth the work of the Lord negligently," and then incontinently slew him.

It is recorded that on February 2nd, 1676, during a performance at the Duke's Theatre, the notorious Louise de Querouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth, appeared in one of the boxes. "Some gallants being seized with a frenzy of mortality" (I quote from Mr. Davenport Adams' "Book of the Play,") "rushed into the pit with drawn swords and flaming torches, shouting curses upon the Duchess." They then hurled the firebrands among the actors, and pricked and slashed the bodies of the audience. For this intellectual amusement on the part of the misnamed "gallants," Charles II. punished the unfortunate and innocent actors! It was this same monarch who bestowed his patronage on the actor, John Lacy, to whom he always gave the best parts in a play, coolly taking them from other actors who did not happen to meet with so much favour in his Royal eyes. Whilst acting in a play called the "Silent Woman," Lacy, presuming on his intimacy with the King, was foolish enough to ridicule his Royal patron, who promptly ordered him to be taken into custody and kept in confinement. Lacy subsequently threw the whole blame on the author of the play, and the two came to blows. When Charles heard of this he had the theatre closed, regardless alike of the convenience of the public and the necessities of the unfortunate actors.

As to the insults openly showered upon the player in the past, their name is legion. A worthy actor named Smith, we are told, had a quarrel with some unknown individual behind the scenes. It was quite a private affair and of no concern to anyone save the parties immediately interested in the little disagreement. Nevertheless, when the

news of the occurrence got abroad a certain number of those delightful individuals, the "gallants" (who seem to have had a *penchant* for interfering with the business and amusements of other people) stormed the theatre, and, as soon as Smith appeared, saluted him with a variety of insulting expressions, and did not cease until the curtain was dropped, and the persecuted actor had retired. A somewhat similar story is told of another actor, one West Digges, who flourished somewhere about 1785. Digges, who was a particularly stiff and stolid individual elected to appear in "Cato." Dressed in what is described as a "shape," composed of buckram and decorated with gilt leather upon a black background, and wearing black stockings, black gloves, and a powdered periwig, Digges stalked on the stage, whereupon someone in the audience saluted him with the exclamation, "A Roman chimney-sweeper on May Day," a remark which almost paralysed the unfortunate actor.

Equally wanting in politeness, to employ but a mild term, was the salutation of that eccentric actress and beautiful woman, Anne Catley, who shouted at an unfortunate player and in a tone of voice that all might hear, "So, you had a piece damned the other night! I'm glad of it! The devil mend you for writing an opera without bringing me into it!" One cannot picture, even dimly, such an incident happening nowadays, say in connection with Mr. Irving or Mr. Wyndham.

The unfortunate actresses suffered even worse treatment. In the eighteenth century the dressing-rooms of the ladies were open to what Dr. Doran calls, the "fine gentlemen" of the period, who went in and out at their pleasure. The conversation of these individuals was apparently as free as their manners which, needless to say, were the quintessence of freedom. For instance, in February, 1667, a certain Hugh Myddleton insulted an actress in her dressing-room, and receiving a sharp reply from the disgusted lady, was man enough to threaten to kick her, or, *mirabile dictu*, to order his footman to kick her! As the helpless woman was leaving the theatre this charming specimen of a "gallant" hired—mark the chivalry of the deed—a ruffian to daub her face and hair with mud.

Sometimes, it must be confessed, the insults came from 'the stage itself, one player holding another up to public ridicule without the smallest compunction. It is recorded, for example, that an audience at Drury Lane expressed annoyance at the non-appearance of a dancer named Roland, when Quin, who had been sent forward to apologise for her non-appearance, delivered himself of this remarkably refined speech: "Ladies and Gentlemen,—Madame Roland has put her ankle out. I wish it had been her neck, and be d—d to her," a liberty which any modern audience would have promptly resented, and in a fashion more vigorous than polite. We are told, too, that whilst Peg Woffington was acting in "Lear," a gentleman calmly came from behind the scenes, threw his arms round her waist and embraced her.

Far more serious than these verbal scratches were the wounds inflicted in the duels which were so often forced upon the old-time actor for the most absurd reasons. The famous Mrs. Bracegirdle was pursued by a Don Juan, a certain Captain Hill, who, receiving no response to his amatory appeals, resolved to carry her off by force when she left the theatre. This officer and gentleman posted half-a-dozen soldiers outside a house in the neighbourhood of the theatre, which the actress was about to visit; and when she made her appearance the unfortunate woman was pounced upon, and a struggle ensued. An actor named Mountfort gallantly came to her rescue, and Mrs. Bracegirdle escaped, but in the scuffle Mountfort was stabbed to the heart. Foote also once narrowly escaped a broken head or perhaps something worse, his intended assailant being none other than the great Dr. Johnson himself. The "great lexicographer" was told that in a play called "The Orators" which Foote had arranged to produce, he (the doctor) was to be mercilessly ridiculed. Johnson therefore gave the actor notice that he intended to plant himself in the front of the stage box on the first night, armed with a stout club, and if anyone attempted to mimic him, he proposed to spring on the stage and knock him down in face of the audience. Needless to say, Foote did not carry out his original idea.

Another narrow escape or, rather series of escapes, occurred at the old Duke's Theatre in 1682. One Sir Charles Dering quarrelled with a Welshman named Vaughan, and the dispute was adjusted by the pair adjourning from the pit to the stage and fighting a duel in full view of the audience, and without any regard whatever for the safety of the actors who stood around them, and within touch of their swords. Nell Gwynne was responsible, indirectly—it is true—for at least one theatrical riot of a serious character. Whilst the ex-orange girl was at the Duke's Theatre, someone—doubtless a "gallant"—insulted her. Miss Nell—presumably acquainted with the manners and habits of those gentry—passed the matter off with a laugh, but the heir to the earldom of Pembroke took it more seriously. Swords were drawn, sides taken, and a free fight took place, the innocent and helpless actors being themselves wounded in endeavouring to make their escape.

And the list might be lengthened with ease, did space permit. Sufficient instances, however, have been quoted to show that in what are euphemistically termed the "good old days" of the drama the actor's life, both on and off the stage, did not run with that smoothness and freedom from assault and insult which characterise that of the player of to-day.

ARTHUR J. DANIELS.



when she made her memorable first appearance at the Gaiety in that one act of "Phèdre." She had "to strike twelve at once," launch herself on the stage at fever heat, and she did it. If I close my eyes I still seem to see, across all these years, the frail creature drifting on to the stage, half borne by her attendants, her life burnt out of her by her consuming passion ; every nerve in one's body trembled to her touch and thrilled and tingled at the despairing agony and shame in face, in voice, in gesture. Sarah dying in "La Dame," Sarah luring the man on to his doom in "Fédora," Sarah even in the vulgar melodrama "La Tosca"—these visions are all memorable to me, delicious nightmares of horror. In "La Tosca" I recall her face—drawn, haggard, and hard—as her hand crept with a dreadful hesitancy to the knife, and then as suddenly she drove it to the hilt in the villain's breast, flinging herself as well as the weapon on to him with a spring like a tigress. I added my mite to the groan and shudder that broke from the house as he fell dead at her feet.

Looking back I see that all my thrillers and shockers have been women. The best actors I have seen have appealed to other emotions ; Salvini has awed me, and Irving's curse of Rome in "Richelieu" stirred me, and Warner's Coupeau literally frightened me. Others have satisfied my intellectual faculties, but I have yet to find the actor who touches the delightful emotions that live in my spine. I pray that he may come speedily, lest when he does, I may be too old and too hardened a stage-goer to welcome him with a responsive shudder and thrill.

ALBERT FLEMING.



Fanny Kemble.



PASSING along Cornhill the other day I noted on the contents bill of an evening paper the line, "Death of a Well-known Actress," as who should say "Death of a *figurante* at the 'Frivolity.'" Half a century ago the news of Fanny Kemble's death would have stirred the heart-throbs of two hemispheres!

It seems but yesterday that an eminent publisher said to me, "She has left three-score-and-ten long behind her, yet she overflows with animal spirits, and is younger than scores of women not half her age. She was here three days ago, seated where you now sit—that is, when she did sit, for she flitted from place to place like a butterfly, laughing, talking, never remaining quiet for a moment."

Strangely enough—inasmuch as, like Macready, she affected to despise the art from which her family derived its fame—at that very time she wrote an admirable and scholarly analysis of the Italian players who were then acting at Covent Garden. Seven or eight years have elapsed since then, and one had almost begun to think that he of the scythe and hour-glass had forgotten her existence, or else granted her a new lease of life, but now the end has come as it must come to all.

The story of her early life—the trials and struggles of the mother whom she loved and the father she adored—has been told so delightfully in the "Records of a Girlhood," that it is only necessary to refer to it here for the purpose of once more dealing with the perpetually repeated fallacy that until now the actor's craft has never achieved social distinction in England. The Kembles were the intimate and chosen friends of "the choice and master spirits of the age," and the gifted Fanny, the grand-daughter of a strolling player who had been a barber, numbered among her bosom friends princes, and poets, and painters, and the highest dignitaries of Church and State.

She "lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came," and at sixteen she was a poet, a painter, a musician, and a linguist. At seventeen she had written the historical play of "Francis I.," a work which notwithstanding its occasional crudity and ignorance of technique, has fine moments and passages akin to inspiration.*

* "Amidst her highest successes on the stage, she must remember that the world regards her as one to whom a still higher part has fallen. She must not be content with the fame of the most extraordinary work which has ever

It is pleasant to note here a remarkable coincidence in her career and in that of Macready. That illustrious actor had arrived at the conclusion that his proper vocation was the Church or the Bar, and had saved a sum of money to enable him to pursue his studies. At this critical moment his brother, who was in the Army, had an unexpected opportunity of promotion by purchase, whereupon William Macready relinquished this long cherished object of his life, handed over to his brother the money he had saved by much self-denial, and returned to the uncongenial drudgery of the stage. Similarly, Fanny Kemble devoted the very first money she ever earned—the goodly sum of four or five hundred pounds, which Murray paid her for “Francis I.”—to the purchase of a commission for her brother Harry.

This precociously accomplished young lady was as familiar with the literature of France and Germany as that of her own country—witness her admirable adaptations from Dumas and Schiller, “The Lady of Belle Isle” and “Mary Stuart.”

At first she was not intended for the theatre. It was the necessities of her family, and not her own inclination which drove her into public life before she had attained her eighteenth year. Her splendid gifts, her youth, her beauty, the name she bore enabled her at one bound to attain a position which it had taken her illustrious relatives years and years of patient and unremitting toil to achieve.

Stage-struck aspirants of to-day doubtless fully convinced that they have only to leap like Pallas from the front of Zeus to enable them to achieve a like result, may do well to remember that, apart from her undoubted genius and her culture, Fanny Kemble was the child of two of the most distinguished artists the English stage has ever produced. One of them was the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, and both taught her all they knew in connection with the most difficult yet most delightful of the arts. It was as much owing to their tuition as to her own ability that she was enabled at the very outset to grapple successfully with such masterpieces as *Belvidera*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Euphrasia* (“Grecian Daughter”), *Mrs. Haller*, *Lady Townley* (“Provoked Husband”), *Lady Teazle*, *Mrs. Beverley*, *Juliana* (“Honeymoon”), and *Calista* (“Fair Penitent”). Before she had attained her majority she “created” *Louise of Savoy* in her own play “Francis I.,” the *Duchess of Guise* in *Leveson Gower’s* adaptation of the elder Dumas’ “Henry III.,” and last, not least, *Julia* in *Sheridan Knowles’* “Hunchback.”

At the end of her third season in town she accompanied her father

been produced by a female at her age (for as such we scruple not to describe her “Francis I.”), with having sprung at once to the foremost rank not only of living actors but of modern dramatists; she must consider that she had given us a pledge and earnest for a long and brightening course of distinction in the devotion of all but unrivalled talent in two distinct, though congenial capacities, to the revival of the waning glories of the English theatre”

—*Quarterly Review*, March, 1832.

to America, where at the very commencement of a career which promised to outvie in its splendour all the glories of her house, to the general amazement and mortification, she retired altogether from public life. She had been on the stage only four years and three months, had indeed, barely attained her twenty-second year ; she had been admired, adored by half the curled darlings of her own country, but she passed them by with easy disdain and elected to become the wife of an American gentleman. The public, which had been astonished at the abrupt termination of her artistic life, was astounded when fourteen years later she returned to her native land to resume the career so abruptly terminated.

It was at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, that she re-appeared on the stage ; from thence she came to the Theatre Royal, Liverpool, where I had the honour to form her acquaintance. At that period the showman's art had not invaded the profession of a gentleman ; advance agents, press wire-pullers, and so-called acting-managers, were not in existence. Hence it came to pass that Mrs. Kemble walked upon the Liverpool stage (where we awaited her arrival with anxiety and curiosity) alone and unattended. We had expected to see a Tragedy Queen. We saw instead a quiet unassuming lady of middle age and middle height, simply attired in a black silk dress. Her pale, classic features were irradiated by a pair of dark, lustrous eyes, which wore an eerie expression—imperious one moment, pleading the next—and which showed forth in vivid contrast to the glory of her abundant hair, even then slightly streaked with grey at the temples. As we simultaneously bared our heads to the last of the Kembles, she responded to the recognition in one comprehensive and gracious courtesy, then, introducing herself *sans cérémonie* to the stage-manager, commenced the rehearsal.

She opened in her original character of Julia, in the "Hunchback," which claims some passing notice here. Fashion is as much "a deformed thief" now as she was in the bard's time, and that which is admired to-day is ridiculed to-morrow. Many years ago the late Mr. Tom Robertson once spoke a little disparagingly of Sheridan Knowles' play "The Hunchback." Had he cared to enquire, Robertson would have learnt that at the time of its original production, one of the most eminent critics of the period said, "'The Hunchback' is in every way a most delightful work ; good in plot, dramatic in composition, elegant, vigorous, poetical in language, deep in knowledge of human nature, varied in display of the passions which adorn or disfigure it, and admirable in their development." He would have further learnt that this much maligned play assisted in retrieving the fallen fortunes of Covent Garden, and brought Charles Kemble's disastrous management to a prosperous termination.

More remarkable still, some eight or ten years ago, this very play was put up in an emergency at the Adelphi (the last house where one would look for such a work) and was played for forty or fifty nights to overflowing houses.

On the occasion of Mrs. Kemble's reappearance at Liverpool she was assisted by Creswick, then at his zenith, as Master Walter, Robert Roxby as Modus, Nye Chart as Fathom, and a stripling then in his teens, who shall be nameless here, was her lover Sir Thomas Clifford, while Miss Kathleen Fitzwilliam was the Helen. The play being at that period a "stock" one, only one rehearsal was required. We were all so perfect in the text and "business" that the "star" scarcely called any one back. She gave no indications of tragic fire in the morning, but Old Salter, who had often seen her act at Covent Garden, muttered, "Wait till you see her at night!" When Master Walter spoke the tag—

"Thou know'st thy peace by finding out its bane,
And ne'er will act from reckless impulse more,"

she said, "A vastly pretty excuse for trying to break this poor woman's heart!" then with another sweeping curtsey and a silvery laugh she bade us "Good morning."

Liverpool had not always been a stronghold of the Kembles. I have seen an autograph letter of "Black Jack's" in which he records in scathing terms that, in their early days, both he and his peerless sister, the Siddons, had been hooted—actually pelted off the stage of the Theatre Royal.

Many things, however, had happened since then, and the name of Kemble had become one to conjure with. Apart from this, conjecture was rife with speculation as to the cause of Fanny Kemble's return to the stage. Up to the last this gifted woman retained a discreet and dignified silence as to the cause of the rupture which led to the breaking up of her home. Strangely enough, in the very building where George Frederic Cooke, being "Bacchi plenus," had defied and denounced the Liverpool merchants as "brutish, barbarous and bloody slave-drivers," a dominant feeling of sympathy was evoked on behalf of Mrs. Kemble because it was currently believed that she was a rabid Abolitionist, and that her husband was an equally rabid advocate of slavery. Be that as it may, the theatre was crowded to overflowing with an eager and excited audience; and when the heroine of the night appeared, a roar of welcome arose which shook the building from base to dome. She trembled and turned pale for a moment; then the glory of her lost youth came back, and she held her audience spell-bound till the end.

The impression here recorded of this remarkable performance, though a youthful one, is not a first impression of the play, as I had already had the honour of acting in it with Miss Helen Faucit in the Edinburgh Theatre, and had been most powerfully impressed with that great actress's rendition of Julia. It might be said of these distinguished women, that Fanny Kemble "raised a mortal to the skies," while Helen Faucit "drew an angel down."

In recalling that memorable night in Liverpool after all these years I can see "in my mind's eye" the wistful sad face "dumb with the depth of a divine despair," the lustre of the beauteous eyes dimmed

with tears but fixed to the last on Clifford's letter, as Master Walter led her despairing from the stage. I can hear the matchless melody of "'Twas Clifford's voice if ever Clifford spoke." Best of all I recall the *tour de force* of the last act. I have a vivid recollection of Macready's "Good God! Ulric, you look!"—of the burst of paternal emotion in Virginius, "I thank thee, Jupiter, that I am still a father!"—of Forrest's "Let them come! We are prepared!" in "The Gladiator"—of Brooke's "Oh! Fool, fool, fool!"—of Ristori's "Tu!" in "Medea"—of Fechter's "I am *not* a lackey, I am an executioner!"—but not one of these illustrious actors, nay, not all of them combined, ever equalled the grace, the beauty, the tragic fire, the perfect majesty, the commingling of exquisite artifice with perfect art, which Fanny Kemble imparted to the eight commonplace monosyllables, "Do it! Nor leave the task to me!"

It was one of those rare occasions when the actor towers head and shoulders above the author. Ryder told me that Sheridan Knowles himself was never weary of affirming that in this instance at least his heroine had attained an altitude he had not dreamt of.

Although one of those supreme moments which live and die with the utterance, yet will I endeavour to describe it:—

Master Walter stood well down to the left of Julia, who occupied the centre of the stage. Tortured, despairing, maddened, she sprang to her feet, erect and terrible. With fiery eyes and dilated form she turned at bay, even as a wounded hind might turn upon the hunter's spear, then with quivering lips she commenced the famous speech, extending over some thirty lines. As it proceeded her voice gained strength, changing from the flute to the bell—from the bell to the clarion. Then upon a rising *sostenuto* of concentrated agony and defiance, she smote and stabbed Walter with that awful "Do it! Nor leave the task to me!" Even as the last word left her lips, she strode down to the right hand corner, returned to the centre, and then came to anchor, her right hand clutched on the back of the great oaken chair, her left thrown out towards Walter, her blazing eyes fixed on him in an attitude of denunciation and defiance. Then it was, and not till then, that the breathless and enthralled auditors rose in such an outburst of wild enthusiasm as I have never heard equalled before or since.

During the engagement Mrs. Kemble played Mariana ("The Wife") Juliana ("The Honeymoon"), Lady Macbeth, Lady Teazle, Mrs. Beverley, Mrs. Haller, and Queen Katharine. In the latter character she recalled her illustrious aunt. Indeed, in the famous apostrophe, "To *you*, Lord Cardinal, do I appeal," her costume, her flashing eyes, her classic features, her majestic bust, her massive but nobly formed arms enabled her to reproduce with startling *vraisemblance*, the pose of the Siddons in Harland's famous picture of the trial scene in "Henry VIII."

It was generally believed that Mrs. Kemble was exacting and inconsiderate, that she regarded the rank and file of the theatre

as beneath her notice ; and her earlier notes about America were so flippant and supercilious that they prejudiced people in the theatre against her. I can only say that at this period she was most affable, charming, and delightfully vivacious. It was my good fortune to be enabled to offer her some slight courtesies, and I found her very gracious, especially with reference to the parts I was privileged to act with her.

She was not indisposed to talk of her art, although, as before stated, she publicly affected to despise it. I once heard her mention one very remarkable thing in connection with her early triumphs, namely, that her father and mother positively forbade her to read any criticism on her performances, alleging that they were her best and most exacting critics, and that any outside opinions would only unhinge and unsettle her mind.

By the way, Mario once told me that he had never read a criticism on himself in his life, and that he never meant to read one.

"Although," said Mrs. Kemble, "my father would not allow me to read a criticism, he read criticisms himself as I have reason to know. There was a man named W——, proprietor of a dreadful paper called the A——. This horrible creature had written something shameful about me, and my father took him by the throat out of the boxes and horsewhipped him out of the theatre."

During the performance of "The School for Scandal," a somewhat ludicrous incident occurred. Lady Teazle was at the wing on the O.P. side waiting for her cue to go on in the third act. It will be remembered that in this situation her ladyship usually makes her entrance humming an air of the period. I had contrived to engross her attention by asking her to explain whether Sir Thomas Clifford was really ruined when he presents himself as Lord Rochdale's secretary, or whether he was merely "making believe." She replied that "Even then she did not know. She had asked the author the question, but that he himself was not quite sure, that at her father's request Knowles had interpolated a line in the last scene to the effect 'There has been masquing here,' and that consequently she was under the impression that——" At this moment the call-boy sang out, "Stage waiting, ma'am." With a laugh she caught up her train and swept on the stage singing—

"Oh ! Hi ! Ho ! the boatmen row—
Going down the Ohio !"

This happened to be the most popular negro melody of the day, and despite its absurd incongruity it made the hit of the evening. Roar followed roar till I thought the house would have come down about our ears.

Two or three months later Mrs. Kemble appeared at the Princess's in conjunction with Macready. I don't think that any love was lost between Macready and the Kembles, and she herself states with complacent disdain that "Mac" openly stated at this time "that she was ignorant of the very rudiments of her art."

During her fourteen years exile a new star had arisen in the dramatic firmament. Helen Faucit had come to dazzle all eyes and delight all hearts, and at this moment her popularity was paramount. The actor's triumphs had need be supreme—they are so soon forgotten. It is easy to forget—especially to forget an actress who leaves you a maid, and returns a matron.

The facts had to be faced, and it occurred to Mrs. Kemble to follow her father's example by reading the plays of Shakespeare. She found a sympathetic and enterprising *entrepreneur* in my excellent good friend the late Mr. John Mitchell, of Bond Street. Now there was an important section of the community—partly Puritan, partly Grundyish—who would like to have gone to the theatre, but who were accustomed to let "I dare not wait upon I would," and who, afraid to be seen in company with the devil in the theatre, compromised matters by shaking hands with his Satanic Majesty in kid gloves at the Lecture Hall. A ghastly sepulchral audience they were, and how a woman of Mrs. Kemble's vivacity and keen sense of the ridiculous could have endured them unless goaded thereto by inexorable necessity appears inexplicable. I happened to be present in Worcester at her reading of "Lear" (a remarkable achievement) to a select audience of a dozen more or less. One eminent agriculturist in my immediate vicinity slept soundly and snored profoundly during the entire reading. The reader merely regarded him with placid contempt, and read on to the bitter end.

Beyond all doubt Fanny Kemble was the best dramatic reader of this epoch. She was not only the best reader, but she was one of the best writers. Leaving out of the question her poems, her plays, and other numerous works, I make bold to affirm that, possibly excepting Lady Martin's "Heroines of Shakespeare," there are not three books in the English language more delightfully written than "A Year's Consolation," "Records of a Girlhood," and "Records of of Later Life."

The records of the stage afford no parallel to the career of this accomplished woman. It was but a small episode (five or six years out of four score and upwards) in a long and honourable life, yet it has left an ineffaceable mark upon the history of dramatic art in this country. The most memorable episode, however, of all her chequered existence, despite its trials, its troubles, and its sufferings served to illustrate in fine form the truth and beauty of the Tennysonian gospel, "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." To that event she owed the solace of her declining years, and the crowning happiness of passing to peace surrounded by her children and her children's children.

JOHN COLEMAN.



An Old Violin.

" Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the Fairies' midwife."



It was only a plough-boy, with hard, coarse hands, and a shy, frightened face with wild, big brown eyes—eyes which saw a Fairy in every flower, and a gnome in every clod of earth which the harrow turned up, warm, and fresh, and smelling of innumerable vanished leaves.

Only a plough-boy with shambling gait and stooping shoulders, and never a word but "Yees, sir!" and "Nay!" because the maids and men laughed at him when he told them he could hear strange, sweet voices low down among the ferns, and whispering underneath the bramble leaves; and so, being laughed at, he went silent, and passed what time he could in the dim little pine wood which girds Hurst Farm east and north, and which gives to it its name.

In the parlour of Hurst Farm, over a roomy, chintz-covered sofa, hangs a curious old violin; and to the window of this parlour the boy would often creep, when his master was at dinner, and he would push the lattice wide open, and he would stare and stare at the rough, quaint thing till the odd little figures which are carved upon it seemed to bow and nod to him; and soft murmurs and sighs seemed to breathe upon the slack strings, and to call and sing to him, till he grew to love it with all the strength of his lonely heart.

One day his mistress, the farmer's wife, found him at the window, and when he muttered and mumbled something about the Fairy in the old violin she laughed, told him he was daft, and pushed him away, saying it was only an old fiddle which the foreigner who once lodged at the farm had left with her till he should send for it.

Somehow the words "only an old fiddle" hurt the boy; they jangled in his ears, and danced up and down before his eyes like odd little black goblins turned into capital letters; they would start out of a wild flower, from the branches of the trees, or gambol in and out the waving grass at the bottom of the brook, and at night they droned him to sleep, and set him dreaming that ever so many old fiddles were dancing round his bed in the loft, and over the sacks of corn. One moonlight night he woke and heard the old violin calling, calling to him—

"Little friend! Little friend, come to me! Come!"

And down the ladder, in shirt and trousers, he slid, and away he

went with eager face and bare feet to the parlour window. The chintz curtains were drawn, and the lattice fastened. But behind them he thought he heard the old violin calling—

“Little friend! little friend, are you there?”

“Yes!” he whispered, and, breathing hard and short, he opened his clasp-knife and lifted the latch of the window; then he crept in through the curtains, and in a trice he was standing on the sofa, and in another trice he was on the common, the violin in his hands, and he was running with all his might to the pine wood.

Here he stopped and shook a little with fear, for it was all so still, and the tall, familiar pines looked like ghosts with long drooping feathery hands stretched down to clutch him by the hair. But he soon laughed the fear away. Were they not his old friends who talked and whispered to him in the day-time? So he sat at the root of one where the light from the full moon fell bright and clear, and he looked long and tenderly at the old violin.

It was dark and worn with age, and, though clumsy and rough, it was as light in the hand as a feather. But more curious than its ungainly shape and the many strange figures carved upon it was the quiet power it possessed; *it seemed to know* that he was looking at it. The boy gave a happy little laugh at this, and he lay down in the grass and flowers, and kissed and kissed it, and then he pressed his cheek close to it, and rested there with his eyes half closed.

Presently the violin began to mutter and buzz in his ear like a shell telling tales of the sea; and in and out between the pines, rising and falling, fainting and swelling, he heard music coming nearer and nearer. Suddenly it pealed out over his head, shrill and clear as the song of the lark, and the strings of the old violin whispered—

“Open your eyes, and look!”

And the boy opened his eyes, and looked; rubbed them, and looked again.

The tall pines, the waving grass, the brambles, the ferns and the fox-gloves are all gone! and in their stead a great hall slowly widens out and grows brighter, brighter every moment, till the faces of the men and women who fill every part of it stand out clear and vivid under a strong light which shines upon them from the roof. They are all turned towards one point—a man who is standing upon a platform that is well-nigh covered with the flowers and wreaths of laurel which have been thrown at his feet, and in the man’s hand is the old violin. He has just finished playing a little sonata which has filled the people with mirth and gladness. They laugh, clap their hands, sway one against the other in a very ecstasy of enjoyment, and only settle into quietude when he lifts the violin to his breast and once more draws the bow over the strings.

This time it is a tender little love song. Soft murmurs fill the air, the sound of downy wings and rustling leaves, the sound of little birds chattering, hurrying to-and-fro between the nests; the sound

of drowsy insects humming themselves to sleep after a day of toil. The subtle sound of dewy night comes creeping up over the earth, bringing with it rest and peace; and with it comes a swirl of water from the eager sides of a boat, the rise and fall of oars, and the sound of a voice, singing, and glad as the Love-God's. It is the lover! His voice rings soft and clear through the sighing of the breeze, the ripple and wash of the waves rippling, rippling over a warm, sea-scented beach; rippling up to the very feet of her he loves. Nearer he comes, nearer . . . Ah! now they meet . . . his arms are around her: broken whispers full of sweet nothings, and musical as the low, tender laugh of love, fall from trembling lips as face grows to face, and eyes fill with tears of supreme content; and a nightingale singing in an almond tree shrills out her song still higher for joy of their joy, and for the rapture of their meeting, and in the vehemence of her singing, shakes the petals from the blossoms of the almond tree on to the woman's flower-crowned hair. It is a world of love! Sin and sorrow are dead! Man has become immortal! He will live! live! live for ever! and his life be one long dream of joy and beauty! With a long, low note, soft as a falling rose-leaf, and filled with all the sadness and all the sweetness of life, the song falls from rapture into rapture and ends in a sigh. The people turn and stare each in the other's face and find they are mere mortal men and women after all!—find that the man standing on the platform has enchanted them for one little ten minutes, while they seem to live an eternity of love.

They are silent awhile, lost in the wonder of it; but now their enthusiasm breaks forth. They cheer and wave hands and caps; his name is shouted by all; he is a god to them.

He stands flushed and triumphant before them, the old violin held carelessly, half-disdainfully in his hand; there is no loving, lingering touch of the strings, no look of gratitude for the music it has helped to make—he is its taskmaster, not its friend.

So together they go, taskmaster and violin, down to a little room at the side where eager friends are waiting, and the violin is given contemptuously into the hands of a boy, Gabriel his name, who is dependent on the man and who is waiting to take it, a boy with a sad, thoughtful face and great beautiful eyes; eyes which kindle into such a passion of love and longing for the old violin as his hands go round it that the marvel is the man does not see the look and wonder at it.

But hark! The people are shouting again, shouting for their musician! Their idol! And as he goes in answer to the call, Gabriel imploringly holds out the old instrument which has helped him to fame, and honour and love; but with no thought of it, no heed to it, the man passes out and on to the platform.

"Ah, but it was you! You made all the music!" the boy whispers with a quick-drawn, passionate breath, and stung and hurt

beyond endurance at the slight to the beloved violin, "I know! I know it was you!"

* * * * *

It is close upon midnight.

In a villa, fragrant with the roses and myrtle which cluster round the windows, is the violin's task-master. He is at the head of his table, with a great company of friends come to wish him "God-speed," for it is his last night in their beautiful city.

Some one makes a jest about the old violin, at which he smiles, and rises, glass in hand, and all eyes are turned to him.

"My violin!"—his voice, deep and full, rings out and startles Gabriel, who is sitting in a room beyond. "Yes, it is ugly and clumsy-looking. It was given to me by an old man, here, in this very city, years ago. I refused it at first, but he entreated me to take it, and when I again refused he cried, 'Nay then! hear it sing! hear it sing!' and then he played upon it, and drew such melody out of the ungainly thing that I burned to possess it, and I almost snatched it out of his hands, crying, 'I accept it!' And at that he laughed and whispered, 'It will make you rich! rich!' and then he laughed again, but such a cold, unearthly laugh that I shivered and closed my eyes, and when I opened them again he was gone. After the first charm and the strange influence the unsightly thing seemed to exercise over me had passed away, I grew heartily ashamed of it, and when I return I will bring another—one that shall not offend your eyes as mine have been offended. So let us drink to my next violin!"

And in the darkened room beyond, Gabriel listens, heart-sore and angry, his young arms folded close about the old violin.

"Do not heed him!" he whispers to it; "I love you! I love you!"

"And I love you!" is breathed back against his mouth.

What was it? Who spoke?

"Do not cast me from you!"

Again the voice, sweet and soft—sweet as a bird's.

He stoops, lost in wonder, towards the violin, which in his alarm he let slip to his feet.

"Take me again in your hands," it whispers.

It is the violin which is speaking! The dearly-loved violin speaking to him.

He lifts it in his trembling hands, and carries it to the open window to look at it by the light of the moon, which has just come out from behind a tall pine.

"You spoke to me! You! Oh, my beloved," he murmurs, his soul caught up and filled through and through with greater, stronger love for the old violin; and the hard rough wood seems to glow and tremble in his tender, loving hands.

"What are you? Oh, speak to me once more!"

Sudden silence takes the night when the violin speaks again;

even the restless leaves of an aspen tree hang motionless, listening to its wondrous voice.

"I am the spirit of a great singer. I sang in Athens many hundred years ago, and to my charge was given the Soul of Music. But I sold the gift the gods gave unto me for gold. And the lust for gold grew within me till I would listen to none who begged for only one song for Charity's sweet sake, but only to those who offered gold. Then the gods in anger caught my Soul away from me and prisoned it here in this rude shell, made by a shepherd-king to please his boys; and here it is doomed to dwell till I have saved a soul. But all the men I serve turn as I did to the lust of gold! and I may not breathe a word to warn them, for only once in many years was the power to speak given me, and when that time was come and speech was mine to use freely as now, I was neglected, alone, while they, as he beyond, were soiling their lives with Sin."

"Speak to me! I will listen."

"I know you will! Have you not breathed hope and comfort into me? Have you not kept me from sinking utterly when my spirit would have broken, and mine, and Music's soul been lost eternally! Listen, and while I speak, look you up to the stars!"

Dainty perfumes fill the air as though all the spirits of all the flowers in the garden below were thronging up, one above the other, to listen; and the river flows past, a stream of living light under the broad-faced moon, till lost in the shade of the hill which shuts the city from sight.

Again the golden voice, divine in its beauty, thrills Gabriel's heart. "From now you will make me wholly yours, you will be my Master, Lover, Friend. . . Nay! Listen! Keep your eyes lifted to the stars, do not drop them to me—you will grow famous, people will worship you, follow you for very love, and for love of the power you will possess; and such wealth shall be yours that the mere naming of it will make men's eyes wide with wonder! But save for the common need of nature, you must not touch one coin of it!"—here the voice goes shrilly up to a keen and passionate note filled with the sound of tears—"If you do, you will be lost, lost. You must give it to make the unhappy happy, the poor man's heart glad, and the lives of little city-children brighter and purer for sight of fields and flowers, and our beautiful God whom men name the Sun. You must give all away and live, as the poorest musician lives, who has naught but his love of music to comfort him! Say, can you do this?"

The boy answers in a low earnest voice, "I can do this you ask of me."

"Then I am yours, but remember my warning, for after this night you will not hear my voice until the time is come for you to leave this world; then if you have been faithful and steadfast, your soul and mine will go hence together! Now farewell, my Master. "Remember!" is murmured once more as he lifts the violin

reverently to his lips. And as the kiss leaves them a few notes of a song are heard, which seem to mount even to the stars, and linger there awhile, like a lark singing, unseen, in the clouds.

"What is that?" comes in a quick-spoken whisper from the lighted room beyond, a whisper with a strange note in it, as though a soul which had been sleeping had suddenly waked to Light and Life.

"Only my boy Gabriel," the musician replies, "he has a marvellous voice when he chooses to use it."

"But it was like the voice of a spirit!" the one who had whispered replied, his eyes luminous as with inward fire.

His fellows laugh at him and tell him to put the spirit in the next picture he paints, and he is silent, and drinks no more that night; and when he goes homewards, the light is still burning in his eyes, and his hands so long idle, are eager to begin anew his work, and his soul to live again the life which once was his. The musician once more replies, "It was my boy Gabriel."

"Bring him in! Bring him in!" cry one and all.

But Gabriel is gone. He is flying down the steps, into the garden and he speeds on until he comes to where a boat is moored. He puts off, and with the violin and bow lying on his knees, rows to the other side of the river where he lands, and again speeds on, and on, and on, till the villa is out of sight. Then he stops, and draws the violin from under his jacket, caressing it, murmuring sweet words to it, utterly lost in the joy of possession.

Now trembling, eager and timid as a lover, he rests it on his breast and draws the bow across the strings, once, twice, three times, and all the night is filled with the rapture of the song which follows—a song of Love, of Liberty, of Soul-freedom.

He plays on, and on, the tears stream down his face, and he cries aloud in the joy of his new gladness.

"You are mine! mine! and I will cleave to you all the days of my life." Then he speeds on once more, and a thick mist sweeps downwards from the hills and creeps up dense and white from the valleys. It blots out the gleaming rivers and the twinkling lights of the city. It sweeps on, and from within it is heard the song of the old violin which grows faint as from a distance. And the mist thickens, and passes on with a noise like so many feet hurrying to-and-fro, and in its passing is heard the voices of the years, the years of Gabriel's life.

Now the song swells out, the morning sun breaks through the mist, scatters it to right and left, and shines upon a cottage garden. In it Gabriel is standing among the flowers, his clear pure eyes turned to the east. He is playing, and the music the old violin makes, sets the birds piping their loudest, and mad to out-sing it.

Suddenly Gabriel drops the bow, and an eager expectant light leaps into his eyes, for a woman's voice is rising full and sweet from the old violin—rising, circling round him in the morning air, and going shrilly up, and up, glorying in him, exulting in him.

"It is the voice ! the voice !" he murmurs ; then he listens again to the voice, which calls—

"Friend and lover !"

"I am here, beloved !" he answers.

And the voice calls again—

"The time is come to leave this world ! For you have conquered Self ! You have grappled with and trampled down every temptation ! You have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked ; and you have made the lives of men and women pure and clean, and your songs shall live with their children for ever. Your work is finished ! Shall we go hence together ?"

"Together !" he cries, with a great burst of joy, which is answered by a sudden outpouring of song from the old violin, which glows, and quickens, and quivers in his hands ; and a thin, rose-coloured mist floats out from it, and out from this there floats the spirit of a woman, radiant and beautiful, and shining like to a star, from her golden head to her snow-white feet.

Gabriel holds up his hands to her ; then, with a low cry, he falls prone and dead to the earth, and the Spirit floats up, singing—

"Come with me, Soul of Gabriel ! Come, let us go hence."

And Gabriel's soul springs up into her outstretched arms, and together they fly Sunwards, and fade into the ruddy, morning glow, which takes them, and makes them one with it, and folds them round in a mantle of rosy light ; and all the birds set up a sudden song, the garden fades away mystic and ghost-like, and in its place stand the tall pines, the foxgloves, and the ferns.

* * * * *

The boy sprang to his feet. The sun was up, the birds were singing, the rooks were cawing, and he could hear the larks shrilling out their songs. He rubbed his eyes, then he looked at the old violin : there it lay within his arm, mute as a mouse. Presently he heard—

"Dan ! Dan ! wheer be 'ee ?"

It was the master calling him ; so he ran through the wood to the front of the farm, hoping to get into the parlour that way, but the mistress was in the porch, driving out two hens which had wandered in from the rick-yard.

"Wheer have 'ee bin ?" she asked. Then her eyes fell upon the old violin. "An' what's 'ee doin' wi' th' old fiddle ?"

"I—I—wanted to hear 'un sing !" the boy stammered.

"Well ! an' have 'ee ?" she laughed.

"Aye !" he answered stoutly.

"Dan Bodlin ! I've alwas thought 'ee a pure lad, a'cause 'ee weer well-nigh tongueless, an' I find 'ee a downright, wholesome breaker of the Lord in Heaven's holy truth !"

"But 'ee have told I things !"

"Theer, get 'ee in ! an' hang that old fiddle in th' parlour, an do'ee put on th' boots !"

Dan obeyed her, and hung the old violin where it always hangs over the sofa. Then he touched it reverently with his lips and hands; and from that day he went about with a springy step, and a clear answer for all.

And if on summer evenings you want to find Dan, you must look for him in the little pine-wood, where you will see him sitting with half the school children around him, listening entranced to the wonderful tales which he says the old violin tells to him.

RACHEL PENN.



Plays of the Month.

"LA ROSIERE."

Comic opera, in three acts, written by H. MONKHOUSE, composed by E. JAKOBOWSKI.
First produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, on Saturday evening, January 14th, 1893.

Major Victor Longueville	{ Mr. J. G. ROBERTSON.	Mdme. Marguerite Fontenay	{ Miss EMILY MILLER.
Captain Henri De L'Espard	{ Mr. BARRINGTON.	Annette	{ Miss F. LEIGHTON.
Pierre Pontols	{ Mr. WILLIAM ELTON.	Julie	{ Miss J. DESBOROUGH.
M. Justin Bartenôt	{ Mr. F. THORNTON.	Barbolet	{ Miss ELSA GERARD.
Francis Carnex	{ Mr. ALBERT JAMES.	Victorine	{ Miss BERTHA JAMES.
Chief of Tzigani	{ Mr. C. JAMIESON.	Marie	{ Miss DELAMERE.
Adeline Dupret	{ Miss V. CAMERON.	Mimi	{ Miss LOUISE BROWN.
Hortense Ricouard	{ Miss L. SAUNDERS.	Josephine	{ Miss MARIE HALTON.
		Dancers	{ Miss M. THURGATE.
			{ Miss ROSE WYNHAM.

It would never do to have the heroine of a comic opera a young lady of the pattern conjured up in every mind by the term *La Rosière*. The Rose Queen, the spotless village maiden, more chaste than ice, more pure than snow, is, alike in *la belle France* and one or two spots in England where Ruskin's influence prevails, a living embodiment of sweetness and simplicity. True, she is crowned, not with "lilies and languor" as Mr. Swinburne would lead us to expect, but with "roses and rapture"—which that inspired authority connects with widely different qualities. But symbols after all are nothing; and moreover, what poet ever was able to avoid confounding virtue with vice upon occasion? So that passion-laden wreath need give us no anxiety. *La Rosière*, in spite of it, is that "simple maiden in her flower" who, in the dead Laureate's view, "is worth a hundred coats of arms." Unfortunately, however, the simple maiden does not "draw" in comic opera. As Mr. Irving has more than once stated with emphasis—"On the stage you must be much broader than nature"; and this applies particularly to heroines of comic opera. They must combine the woman's wiles of Lady Clara Vere de Vere with a method of holding the mirror up to nature which obtains in halls less exclusive than her ladyship's. Yielding to the inevitable, therefore, Mr. Monkhouse has trespassed upon the realms of the original in scoring the outlines of his Rose Queen, who is as arrant a flirt and impudent a romp as ever rollicked through a Restoration comedy. To restore the balance, though, he has stuck

with pathetic fidelity to commonplace convention in all other respects. Three pairs of lovers are parted, resort to various devices to annoy one another (and to find an excuse for appearing in new costumes), and come happily together again—and there is the comic opera. Lay the Army and the Romany under contribution, and there are picturesque chorus and plausible machinery for separation and effective disguise. Place the heroines at school and reserve the coronation of the Rose Queen for the final *tableau*, and there is your character contrast and your spectacular tit-bit. Of such ingenious contrivance is comic opera in general, and this one in particular. Nor is there need for anything more. Mr. Monkhouse, the contriver, has played so often in similar works that he has learned exactly what tickles the palate of the public, and in “La Rosière” he has provided fare such as they invariably approve. Quaint dresses of the 1830 period, beautiful “sets” of ancient houses smothered in creepers and buried in trees, stirring gipsy melodies from Mr. Jakobowski’s pen, these are the chief attractions, and very pretty and fascinating they all are. The actors, of course, count for something—notably Miss Halton, a very lively comedienne, full of sparkle and fun, a decided acquisition to the comic opera stage, and Mr. Elton, whose energy and saltatorial skill are as remarkable as ever. Miss Violet Cameron and Mr. Robertson are the chief singers, of whom the latter demands notice, inasmuch as he is a tenor with a wonderfully sweet voice but not an ounce of affectation. And among less noticeable features of the production are the comedy of Mr. Thornton and a gipsy *pas de deux* by Miss Wyndham and Miss Minnie Thurgate.

“THE MAGIC OPAL.”

A new and original light opera, in two acts, written by ARTHUR LAW, composed by SENOR ALBENIZ
First produced at the Lyric Theatre on Thursday evening, January 19th, 1893.

Telemachus Ulysses	} Mr. H. MONKHOUSE.	Olympia	.. ..	Miss SUSIE VAUGHAN.
Caramollas	.. ..	Zoe	.. ..	Miss E. ORFORD.
Alzaga	.. ..	Christina	.. ..	Miss DORA THORNE.
Arristippus	.. ..	Irene	.. ..	Miss E. MONMOUTH.
Pekito	.. ..	Thekla	.. ..	Miss R. HAMILTON.
Trabucos	.. ..	Alethia	.. ..	Miss C. CRANFORD.
Curro	.. ..	Lelia	.. ..	Miss DOLLY WEBB.
Martina	.. ..	Lolika	.. ..	Miss AIDA JENOURE.
	Miss MAY YOHE.			

Mr. Law has not hit upon a very novel theme for the back-bone of his light opera, but if it lacks something in novelty the want is made up in security. In popular phrase, it is as safe as houses. For charms, amulets, and talismans, and all such fairy lore, are as enthralling and impressive to the multitude as if fortune-telling was not a penal offence, and everyone regulated his actions by the sage dicta of astrologers, after the fashion of Mr. Fitzgerald Molloy and his little band of true believers. The charm, as a dramatic property, never fails. Whether it be handled by the satirical Mr. Gilbert—as in “The Palace of Truth”—or by the pseudo-poetical Mr. Calmour—as in “The Amber Heart”—the theme is certain of a sympathetic hearing. Whether it ensures invisibility, conjures love, provokes hate, or compels the utterance of a naked truth, matters nought. The supernatural is everything, and even the bare suggestion of magic and mystery will throw an audience into the happiest state of excitement and expectancy. “’Twas ever thus from childhood’s hour,” as the poet sings, and, seeing that the most of us are children all our lives, thus it will remain. But choice of theme is not everything. Treatment of it goes for much; witness

railway chairmen's announcements of diminished dividends which can be so deftly made as to cause worthy gentlemen "no great uneasiness." It is therefore a matter for further congratulation that Mr. Law has not only caught his hare but very adroitly cooked it. His charm is one that works terrific havoc. Its owner, rightful or wrongful, upon being touched by a person of the opposite sex, is at once the object of that person's adoration. This opens up a wide range of comic and tragic possibilities, over which no doubt Mr. Law's keen eyes have wandered far and near. Being in pursuit of "light opera," however, he has left the tragedy alone and dealt only with the comedy, and very capital the results of his dealing are. A swashbucklering brigand chief becomes enamoured of a Grecian maiden, and, like Mr. Roberts in "*Tra-la-la Tosca*," "he must and will possess her." Some of his ideas, however, are refined, for a brigand; and the first is that she should love him to begin with. This might be awkward but that he knows of a magic opal, wrested from an ancestor and long buried in the museum of the Mayor. This opal is among his beloved's wedding presents—upon her marriage to another—and by practising the magician's trick with Aladdin's lamp the brigand secures it, after abducting the bridegroom and thus preventing the wedding. Trabucos, however, is hoist with his own petard. Olympia, a brigandess, has loved him long and won no vestige of affection in return; so she resorts to the opal, cleverly gets possession of it, and with a touch infects the chief with wild adoration, at the same time interceding for the fond pair, his prisoners, and restoring them to love and liberty. Mr. Law's "book" is full of happy humour, dramatic vigour, and pretty sentiment, and the music of Senor Albeniz is distinguished by a melody, a force, and an eloquence rare indeed in compositions for the comic opera stage. Of the actors Mr. Brownlow as the brigand, and Miss Vaughan as Olympia, bore the chief burden gallantly; a great hit, however, was scored by Miss Yohe as the hero's tuneful sister, and Miss Jenoure—though enjoying few outlets for her comedy gifts—played the much-loved heroine with delightful piquancy and charm. As a spectacle the opera is worthy of a place among Mr. Sedger's productions, and that is saying, perhaps, all that can be said in praise of beauty, luxury, and perfect taste.

"OVER THE WAY."

A comedy, in one act, by the late T. W. ROBERTSON.
Produced at the Court Theatre, on Friday evening, January 20th, 1893.

Mr. Chirrup Mr. ELLIOTT. | Alfred Hardy Mr. W. DRAYCOTT.
 Jessie Miss ELLALINE TERRISS.

To lend a look of importance to the revival of the "triple-bill," this paltry specimen of Robertson's art was dusted down and set upon its legs. But these are not the days for Robertson even at his best, and Robertson at his worst proves sadly ineffectual and tame. Mr. Chirrup is attached by many Darby ties of memory to his dead and gone Joan, and when he observes traces of the blind love-god's frolics in the demeanour of his landlady's child, he sets about to find the youth, to smooth all obstacles, and play deputy Providence to the happy couple. There is the play—a play which never assuredly would have seen the footlights if its author had not written "Caste" and "Ours" and "School." Mr. Elliot is far too clever an actor and

keen an observer to walk even in water without leaving an impression. His picture of the kindly old man, one of a familiar Dickens type—a Cheeryble with a sad past—is charmingly human and simple. Mr. Draycott is, can be, merely the duly good-looking, well got-up youth supposed to embody the average maiden's ideal. But Miss Terriss, by the unaffected exercise of the gifts her fairy godmother has endowed her with, makes the girl so dainty, sweet, and lovable that in regarding her and listening to her pretty voice the tenuity of the piece is forgotten, and thoughts of protest disappear. "The Burglar and the Judge"—dull "interlude"—with Mr. Brookfield again as the unconvincing cracksman, and the splendid comedy powers of Mr. Weedon Grossmith absurdly wasted upon the Judge, was followed by the evergreen "Pantomine Rehearsal" with a few additions and improvements. Mr. Brandon Thomas is sadly missed, the portentous heaviness of his military manner being beyond Mr. Brookfield's range, but Mr. Grossmith and Miss Terriss are inimitable, as ever, and with them to the fore the attractions of the sketch moult no feather.

"THE SPORTSMAN."

Farcical comedy, in three acts, adapted by W. LESTOCQ from "Monsieur Chasse" by GEORGES FEYDEAU.

First produced at the Comedy Theatre, on Saturday evening, January 21st, 1893.

Harry Briscoe	Mr. C. H. HAWTREY.	Mrs. Robert Briscoe ..	Miss M. MILTON.
Bob Briscoe	Mr. W. R. SHIRLEY.	Mrs. Fritchley	Miss ANNIE GOWARD.
Dr. Holroyd	Mr. C. GROVES.	Emily	Miss EVA WILLIAMS.
Mr. Perkins	Mr. W. F. HAWTREY.	Mrs. Briscoe	Miss LOTTIE VENNE.
Mr. Robey	Mr. ERNEST PERCY.		

There is nothing in its way quite so satisfying upon the English stage as the picture of Mr. Hawtreys as a peccant gadabout "cornered." In days gone by one used to think Mr. Wyndham perfect in a similar plight. Who can ever forget Percy Greythorne during that halting recital of his fictitious journey to Cottonopolis, in the final scene of "Pink Dominos"? But Mr. Wyndham as the errant husband pales before his successor. The placid plausibility of Mr. Hawtreys defies description. It is a triumph of art—that *summa ars artem celare* to which the Haymarket proscenium ever directs our attention, with lamentable results at every visit to most of the actors appearing beneath. That "decay of lying" which Mr. Oscar Wilde lately thought he saw in progress, with inexpressible pain to his Pagan soul, can be no more than a dreadful chimæra when such consummate professors of the art may still be found as Mr. Hawtreys. His polished manner of invention is to be classed with the ringing declamation of Mr. Vezin, the austere authority of Mr. Irving, the insistent tenderness of Miss Ellen Terry, as the highest expression of an artist, as the most notable characteristic and art product of the first comedian of our day. Therefore any play which gives scope for its telling introduction is up to a certain point satisfactory, and "The Sportsman" in doing so passes muster easily. But Mr. Lestocq's play has more in it than a good part for Mr. Hawtreys. It has besides tact, discretion, humour, contrivance, and a nice feeling for the prejudices of "the great B.P."—as the almighty Public is called behind the footlights. Mr. Lestocq has bowdlerised his original with an ingenuity equal almost to Mr. Burnand's when he converted the riotous, shameless "Bébé" into the harmless, innocent "Betsy." His hero is merely a gambler who stoops to dangerous deception to gratify his passion, and, once his excuse for absence is proved false,

becomes the suspect of a jealous wife. That wife, abandoning her home in fury, takes refuge with an old friend whose rooms are above those of the gaming club to which her husband resorts, and upon which presently the police make a raid. Here are opportunities for piling up the complications, and thickening the common or kitchen gruel of intrigue which every playgoer will at once recognise, and so shrewd an old stage hand as Mr. Lestocq could not if he tried turn to poor account. The plot, like a snowball, takes on a new layer of fun at every turn, and when Mr. Hawtrey, a ragged fugitive from justice, reaches home at last, to be confronted by his wife bristling with a full knowledge of his sins, and driven to a fagged imagination for the story of his doings, there ensues a scene of humorous embarrassment as frankly farcical, perhaps, as anything the Comedy stage has borne. To three players, after Mr. Lestocq, the success is chiefly due—Mr. Hawtrey, Miss Venne, as the jealous wife, and Mr. Groves, as the family friend. As with all Miss Venne's work, so with this, every word, every look is pointed with comic intention, and one more proof is given that she is the one subtly-comic actress on the stage; while Mr. Groves, artist to the finger tips, reminds us of the fact by playing with rigid restraint a thankless part, which, with a little exaggeration he could easily render effective in the extreme—to the immaterial detriment of his fellow-leaders. Miss Annie Goward gives a very clever sketch of a landlady, and the rest fill small spaces unobtrusively. Farcical comedy, with "The Sportsman," is well to the front again.

Preceding "The Sportsman" came a fresh and pretty comedietta, by W. T. Cullum, called "A Welsh Heiress." Being an heiress of drama she is of necessity unconventional, and after a heavy London season trapeses about her country place in the garb of a dairy-maid. This provokes a gentleman-poacher to rally and pique her, and thus to arouse an interest which quickly develops into a kind of love. When the keepers arrive to arrest him it is the old story of "Hold your hands, ye varlets: this is your master!" and the curtain falls to the accompaniment of wedding bells. The piece, though conventional, has a breezy, pleasant atmosphere to recommend it, and played as it was with genial good humour by Miss Vane Featherston and Mr. W. Herbert, as the lovers; Mr. Wyes and Mr. Ernest Percy, as the Keepers; and Miss Florence Haydon as a neatly-sketched Welsh woman, it readily passed muster as an agreeable trifle.

"ROSES OF SHADOW."

A Piece, in one act, by ANDRE RAFFALOVICH. Played for the first time at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court Road, on Thursday afternoon, January 26th, 1893.
 Blanche Darlen . . . Miss FLORENCE WEST. | Severin Campton . . . Mr. A. H. REVELLE.

It seems hardly worth while to study the minds of women who purchase husbands, and youths whose profession it is to invent button-holes and secure advertisement by idiotic affectations. Mr. Raffalovich thinks otherwise, however, and the result of his studies was presented at Mr. J. T. Grein's dramatic "at home." Mr. Raffalovich is believed to be the gentleman of whom Mr. Oscar Wilde said that "he tried to establish a salon, and only succeeded in running a restaurant"—a biting testimony to the indiscriminating hospitality of the subject of the *mot*. Be that as it may, the author is known not only as a poet, but as a lover of swallow-tailed Bohemians, and therefore is well equipped as writer and critic for his task of showing up the follies of Bohemians' hangers-on. His

Campion is an egregious ass, and his Blanche deserves all the discomfort which her marriage with an ass ten years her junior will probably bring; and Mr. Raffalovich treats Jackass and Jenny alike to the anatomist's unsparing scalpel, and cuts down to their egoism, shallowness and insincerity, with notable skill and precision. The sketch has no dramatic value, but it demonstrates the author's knowledge, and reveals a pretty talent for smart dialogue and superficial presentation of the social follies of the day. After it, there was reverently placed upon the stage that prime bone of contention Ibsen's "Ghosts." When Mr. Grein produced the tragedy at the Independent Theatre, he permitted dogs of every breed, from mastiff to mongrel, to fight over it, gnaw it, mumble it, and scare the world with their howlings and their rabid yells. This time only the faithful were admitted, and though this fact made no difference to the drama, which still seemed inconclusive and merely curious instead of piteous and tragic, the play was certainly the more enjoyable. Mrs. Theodore Wright repeated her profoundly natural study of the martyred Mrs. Alving, and Mr. Leonard Outram again gave faultless expression to the worldly-wise discretion of Parson Manders. The Oscar, however, was a novelty, Mr. Lewis Waller playing the part with finely-restrained force and unusual endeavours to bring details into artistic prominence, and to avoid too strong a scoring of the effective outlines of the character—the actor's favourite method. Miss Hall Caine, too, was a new Regina. In all that this young actress does there is evidence of intellect and the histrionic gift. Her personality, however, opposes a stern barrier, though a fair, to any assumption of villainy, and Regina's face and tones belied her words and deeds. But it was a promising effort, and was another claim to well-deserved recognition. Mr. Norreys Connell was the Engstrand, verging on melodrama all the time, but none the less useful for that, seeing how melodramatic he and his doings are. The revival was presented to a thronged audience who received it with a warmth that bordered on enthusiasm.

"THE BAUBLE SHOP."

An original play of modern London life, in four acts, by HENRY ARTHUR JONES.
First produced at the Criterion Theatre, on Thursday evening, January 26th, 1893.

Viscount Clivebrooke	Mr. C. WYNDHAM.	Mr. Body	.. ..	Mr. D. S. JAMES.
The Earl of Sarum	Mr. C. W. SOMERSET.	Mr. Mims	.. ..	Mr. S. AUSTIN.
The Hon. Chas. Teviot	Mr. A. AYNESWORTH.	Bence	.. ..	Mr. H. LEBRETON.
Sir John Stradbroke	Mr. F. ATHERLEY.	Lady Kate Ffennell	..	Miss FANNY ENSON.
Mr. Piers Bussey, M.P.	Mr. W. BLAKELEY.	Lady Bellenden	..	Miss LOUISE MOODIE.
Mr. Stoach, M.P.	Mr. S. VALENTINE.	Gussy Bellenden	..	Miss ELLIS JEFFREYS.
Ireson	Mr. F. WORTHING.	Jessie Keber	..	Miss MARY MOORE.
Matthew Keber	Mr. W. E. DAY.			

"What you cannot vivify, that you should omit." This was the advice Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson gave himself—and others—long ago, in writing of the art of portrait-painting with pen and ink, and this is the advice upon which Mr. Jones has acted unswervingly in picturing the inmates of his "Bauble Shop." He deals with the House, its curiously contrasted members, their passions, prejudices, aspirations, and what he could not vivify he has omitted. He brings into relief and close relation the nobly and the humbly born, and what he could not vivify he has omitted. With a fine courage, a splendid audacity, seeing what the parrot-cry of the hour is in the world dramatic, he has snapped his fingers at the claims of realism, and shrouded in a charming veil of romance the commonplace, not to say dull and ugly, features of everyday political and social life.

His hero, Viscount Clivebrooke, Leader of the House of Commons, is a kind of undeveloped George D'Alroy. His brilliance, his position, have overlaid his virtues with a crust of cynicism and philosophic doubt, and he is not quite so ready as was that hero of the Mutiny to wed his Esther Eccles, who does not dance in the ballet this time but breathes the less exciting, if not less pigment-laden, atmosphere of a toy-shop. It is well that this Young Parliamentary Hercules is upon nodding terms at least with bad angels as well as good, for one of the truest and most moving scenes is that in which, through the fiendish cunning of his chief political adversary—a hard-shell Social Purity and Labour member—the girl's drunken father is lured from her side, and Clivebrooke finds himself alone with his poor little sweetheart, alone with opportunity, temptation, and desire. Here Mr. Jones strikes down to the bed-rock of humanity, and shows us what a dramatist should show us—a man at war with himself in manhood's cause. To Clivebrooke—whatever it may be to Mr. Buchanan—the Age of Chivalry is not past. The struggle is long and bitter, but he comes through it nobly, and is leaving Jessie for good when his enemy Stoach enters, and announces his intention of using the evidence he now has to blast the Leader's political career. He will oppose Clivebrooke upon that gentleman's introduction of his much-trumpeted Public Morals Bill, proclaim its noble introducer's intrigue with a daughter of the people, and hound him from the Treasury Bench and public life. Taken unawares, the Norman blood runs sickly pale, the descendant of a hundred earls whines and supplicates and grovels, but in vain. Stoach is inflexible. The scandal shall be told in Gath; it shall be published in the ha'penny Extra Specials of the streets of Ascalon. A turn of the kaleidoscope and we are on the eve of Clivebrooke's long expected triumph. The scene is the Leader's room—an exact facsimile, so Members "in the know" declare. Stoach is no exception to Sir Robert Peel's rule. He, too, has his price. But the terms are too high. They include Clivebrooke's resignation, the withdrawal of the Bill, retirement from public life, and a statement tantamount to a confession. The shameful offer is rejected, and Stoach whispers the story in the lobbies. In vain plead the Whips—the big men of his party—and his white-haired father—stickler for caste, and as fond, no doubt, of Froissart as was "the Marquizzy," to whom he presents some angles of resemblance. Clivebrooke is obdurate. He will brave the peril. The hubbub of the House is heard (startlingly like the "gathering tumult" in Verona, a Paris mob during the Reign of Terror, and any other stage upheaval of an excited super populace) as he stalks to his place. The Bill is introduced. Stoach moves the adjournment of the debate on the ground that the Leader of the House is not a fit person to have charge of the Bill, and carries it; and Clivebrooke is ruined and disgraced. With the last scene comes a thrilling chord of pathos. The ex-Leader sees his duty clear. He asks Jessie to marry him. His witty, brilliant cousin, Lady Kate, takes the girl to her arms. Will the haughty old Earl do the same? Pride wrestles in his heart with love for his son and pity for the girl; and pride is overthrown. Tremblingly the old man takes Jessie's hand and places it within his son's. Stoach is defeated after all, and flies, baffled, from the scene, while Clivebrooke's sun sets before a long (honey-) moon—to

rise again, it is implied, yet more resplendent when duty summons him from Jessie's side. The objections to the play are many. Anywhere but in a theatre it would be absurd to suggest that a young nobleman could be driven from political life because of an innocent—or even a guilty—intimacy with a toy-shop girl. Anywhere but in a theatre it would strike every man—if not every woman, too—as ludicrous that in a Parliamentary debate a member should attempt to discuss an irrelevant subject like the Leader's private life, with the Speaker on the pounce for any such infringement of the rules. Anywhere but in a theatre a man like Clivebrooke would have faced his eaves-dropping foe, and kicked him out of the house. Anywhere but in a theatre a Clivebrooke, truly loving, superior to the pettinesses of convention, master of himself, would at once have married the girl whose love he had inspired. But these lapses from a proper standard of reality only affect Mr. Jones's credit as a dramatist. By very virtue of them, as a playwright he reigns supreme. Without their aid he could not get so interesting and exciting a picture. His lights would be too dim, his shade too deep. The colouring would be too sombre; the tone too sad. Had he drawn human folk we should have had a tragedy. Tragedy is not what people like. Therefore Mr. Jones, wise in his generation, measuring his audience to a hair's breadth, and fitting them to perfection, adopts the Robertsonian style, adds his own strength, and presents us with heroines and heroes as faultlessly moulded as the P. R. A.'s upon whose forms we gaze with the ever-sweet and fresh (if cheap) satisfaction of counting ourselves part of humanity thus made divine. The play is indeed a miracle of cleverness—cleverer than "The Dancing Girl," wittier, shrewder, happier, and—exquisite stroke of management!—not a whit less romantic. The players, too, were worthy of the author and the play. Mr. Wyndham betters not only his own Garrick—his high water mark in sober work hitherto—but everything that any actor has done in modern drama, save, perhaps, Mr. Forbes Robertson's towering "Profligate." One could watch his man-of-the-world love scenes, captivating, irresistible, yet tinged with a faint society insincerity; one could suffer the scenes of agony, desperation, deadly calm and manly resignation, a score of times, without feeling that the tale was an old one. Scarcely less satisfying was the fanatical Stoach of Mr. Valentine, a convincing study of the narrow-minded, iron-hearted inflexibles whom Mr. Jones delights to reproduce. Mr. Somerset, again, is beyond criticism as the hard, worldly-wise old peer. This earl is not far beneath that other—always to be associated with his name—the intolerant fiery grandfather of Little Lord Fauntleroy. The minor parts are excellently done—notably Mr. Day's pitiful drunkard, and Mr. James's political parasite. Miss Enson is of all actresses happiest as a good-natured woman of the world, and plays Lady Kate with distinction. Miss Jeffreys suggests rather than embodies the (music-hall) song-girl of the period. And Miss Moore is all that Jessie has to be, sweet, girlish, tender, gracious, a poet's toy-shop-girl.

"AN UNDERGROUND JOURNEY."

A comedietta, in one act, by Mrs. HUGH BELL and C. H. BROOKFIELD.

First produced at the Comedy Theatre on Thursday afternoon, February 9th, 1893.

The Duke of Peckham }
Rye }

Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.

A Railway Guard .. Mr. WM. WYES.

Mrs. Jennings .. Miss FANNY BROUGH.

Mrs. Hugh Bell has no need to rush all over the earth, after the

fashion of most writers for the stage, before she can find a subject to treat. Her dramas lie practically ready-made in drawing-rooms, offices, wherever men and women congregate, and observation finds material to work upon. The latest thing she has thrown into stage form is a chance interview between a duke and a cook, in a second-class carriage on the Underground. The Duke of Peckham Rye travels third, the cook goes first. But tickets matter little on the Underground, and they find themselves in a second-class compartment. The cook is such a treasure that she is to replace a *chef* in the Duke's household, and from her knowledge of his affairs the Duke jumps to the conclusion that she must be the Russian Princess, her late mistress, with whom he has been in correspondence about her. She takes him for a commercial traveller, and not until he reveals his identity after making ardent love, does she declare hers and the object of her underground journey, viz., a visit to the Duke, to apply in person for the situation. The trifle has all the light wit and naturalness which Mrs. Bell's comediettas generally possess, and played as it was with the driest humour by Mr. Maude and Miss Brough, and with eccentric drollery by Mr. Wyes as an intrusive guard, it took its place immediately beside "Time is Money"—that witty little play from her pen, which Mr. Hawtreay and Miss Venne repeated the same afternoon in the cause of the People's Concert Society, for the benefit of which the *matinée* was given.

"BARTONMERE TOWERS."

An original comedy, in three acts, by RUTLAND BARRINGTON.
Produced at the Savoy Theatre, on Wednesday afternoon, February 1st, 1893.

Lady Hanbury	Miss EMILY CROSS.	Maurice Farquhar ..	Mr. P. CUNNINGHAM.
Mary Hanbury	Miss LILY HANBURY.	Morton Cope	Mr. YORKE STEPHENS.
Gertie Conyngham ..	Miss HELEN LEYTON	Hon. Bertie Moline ..	Mr. FRANK LACY.
Mrs. John-on	Miss R. BRANDRAM.	Inspector Morrison ..	Mr. FOWLES.
Sir James Hanbury ..	Mr. R. BARRINGTON.	Johnson	Mr. DEFLEDGE.
Sir Richard Beauuly ..	Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.	Pawson	Mr. HASWELL.
Dr. Farquhar	Mr. C. FULTON.	James	Mr. LICHFIELD.
Richard Farquhar ..	Mr. W. HERBERT.		

The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. Mr. Barrington calls his last play a comedy, but even a blind man would not fail to detect the roughnesses of melodrama which belie that gentle title. Two reputed brothers, both alike in dignity, love one woman, who replies by loving the better-looking of the two. This one is Maurice, really son of a woman done mysteriously to death and her husband who died in prison under suspicion of having murdered her. Richard the Rejected tries in vain to penetrate the secret and use it to his rival's discomfiture, and failing here becomes Richard the Revengeful, and rides at Maurice in the hunting field, occasioning him a serious fall which might have ended fatally. Eventually the hand of Morton Cope, a ne'er-do-weel who knows the truth, is forced, and Maurice is relieved from the imputation of being a murderer's offspring—his mother having, it is understood, committed suicide. This amply satisfies the vulgarian parents of Mary Hanbury; Richard the Remorseful confesses to his dastard deed—a superfluous act of atonement, since Mary saw him do it, and tragically said so over Maurice's mutilated form at the close of the second scene; and Maurice and Mary live happily ever afterwards. Frank conventionality is evidently good for Mr. Barrington's soul, and if he had only pulled his puppets' strings less jerkily, might have proved so for the public too. But the play as it stood was thin, not to say bald. Several scenes, however, were effective—an actor-

author's work generally has good moments—and the strong company engaged did them justice. A pretty love-passage was treated with delicate charm by Miss Hanbury and Mr. Juningham, comely lovers and dramatic. An interview between Mr. Cyril Maude as a doctor with a secret and Mr. Stephens as a scamp with another, was a nicely balanced piece of fencing—nothing noisy or violent about it, all quiet, supple, dexterous, and deadly. Miss Brandram as a sweet old nurse, Mr. Barrington as an aldermanic gourmand—knighted because he could eat more than his fellows—Miss Leyton as an up-to-date young girl, smart and mannish, all played with cleverness; and Mr. Fulton added one more to his long list of pathetic papas. But actors, be they never so strong, cannot provide foundations, and “Bartonmere Towers” is a monument of industry which has, I fear, been raised upon the quicksands of a worn-out taste.

“BECKET.”

Tragedy, in five acts, by ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

First produced at the Lyceum Theatre, on Monday evening, February 6th, 1893.

Thomas Becket	Mr. IRVING.	Youngest Knight Tem- plar	Mr. GORDON CRAIG.
Henry II.	Mr. W. TERRISS.	Lord Leicester	Mr. HARVEY.
King Louis of France	Mr. BOND.	Philip de Eleemosyna	Mr. HOWE.
Gilbert Foliot	Mr. LACY.	Herald	Mr. L. BELMORE.
Roger	Mr. BEAUMONT.	Geoffrey	Master LEO BYRNE.
Bishop of Hereford ..	Mr. CUSHING.	Retainers	{ Mr. YELDHAM. Mr. LORRIS.
Hilary	Mr. ARCHER.	Countrymen	{ Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. REYNOLDS.
John of Salisbury ..	Mr. BISHOP.	John of Oxford	Mr. IAN ROBERTSON.
Herbert of Bosham ..	Mr. HAVILAND.	Servant	Mr. DAVIS.
Edward Grim	Mr. W. J. HOLLOWAY.	Eleanor of Aquitaine	Miss GENEVIEVE WARD.
Sir Reginald Fitzurse	Mr. FRANK COOPER.	Margery	Miss KATE PHILLIPS.
Sir Richard De Brito	Mr. TYARS.	Rosamund de Clifford	Miss ELLEN TERRY.
Sir William De Tracy	Mr. HAGUE.		
Sir Hugh De Morville	Mr. PERCIVAL.		
De Broc	Mr. TABB.		
Richard de Hastings..	Mr. SELDON.		

After seeing Mr. Irving as Becket, there comes to mind a sentence of Walt Whitman's about confronting “the growing arrogance of Realism.” Whatever “Becket” may be, the wondrous glory of genius trumpeted by innumerable *pros.*, or the patch-work melodrama timidly decried by the handful of *cons.*, certain it is that the Lyceum version of it is a brave unflinching stand for the Romantic. Perhaps one should cast aside all diffidence, throw the noble poet to the critics, and study to attain the actual truth. In which case, one's verdict should be “A triumph for the Champion of Romance!” For Mr. Irving's the triumph is. It is he who sheds the lustre on the playwright peer, not the dramatist on him. In a sense foreign to that intended in the graceful phrase coined in the manager's first-night speech, another laurel has been “placed upon the poet's brow,” and the placing of it redounds to the actor's credit, for the laurel by right is his own. All along the line, indeed, the victory is Mr. Irving's. He found Becket a dead, dismembered thing; his skill was equal to articulation of its bones, and his hand gave it movement and the semblance of life. It consisted chiefly of long tedious discussions upon dry-as-dust questions affecting the King's and Clergy's privileges; by sheer force of stage-craft he has changed the dominant note to one of human passion. The commonplace he has charged with dignity, the dull he has made interesting, and drawing with more generous hand than commonly upon the unequalled resources of his art he bequeathes to the stage a portrait of the great Chancellor and priest, which, faithful or misleading, is magnificent in outline, masterly in colour, exquisite in finish. Judged by the laws which govern other plays than poets', “Becket” lacks

nearly everything it should possess. It is disconnected, contradictory, obscure. The Prelate's conscience, in the matter of the King and Rosamund; that "frail fair dove's sweet innocence" and ignorance—albeit she is travelled woman, say of five or six-and-twenty at the least—of the King's maturer Queen; these are stumbling blocks to one's enjoyment. Then, too, the vast majority of the characters are but lightly sketched—"sketched" even were too full a word for such rough jottings as they are—and interest is so sooner awakened than it is bid sleep again. Yet, despite all this, the tragedy absorbs, delights, because its master figure is the man's it is, and because in the shadow of his commanding form there shines with gentle radiance the sweetest and most winning girl-woman that even Miss Ellen Terry has created. For his sake and hers, one suffers smilelessly the "two-pence coloured" melodrama of the rampant Queen, the dagger and the poison-bowl, and Becket's Sims-and-Buchananesque arrival in the nick of time. Were there no pictures—such pictures as one finds nowhere but in Mr. Irving's playhouse—pictures of knights in mail, of priests and barons in gorgeous panoply, of Rosamund's retreat, with Nature at her loveliest, of the sombre scene of Becket's martyrdom, the high altar and the massive pillars majestic in the gloom—were there none of these, he would be insatiable who could not rest content with that grand figure of the soldier-priest, a nobler Richelieu, and the pathetic innocent his sword-arm shields. Opinions will differ upon Mr. Irving's conception of the Prelate. The man of intellect, of spirituality which grows to saintliness, will clash with the accepted view of lusty Henry's lustier subject. But there can hardly be two opinions about the art with which this dominating Prelate is portrayed. Nor two upon the splendid vigour and (twelfth-century) kingliness of Mr. Terriess's robustious Henry, upon the classic tragic air of Miss Ward's Eleanor, the welcome humour of Miss Phillips' quaint "gossip Margery," or the amazing naturalness of Rosamund's boy Geoffrey—untaught Leo Byrne. Costumiers and scene-painters' triumph "Becket" is not, if "Henry VIII." and "Lear" were. Nor is it dramatist's. "Becket" is Irving, and Irving is "Becket." With him the glory rests. There is none this time to dispute his throne.

"UNCLE SILAS."

A new drama, in four acts, by SEYMOUR HICKS and LAWRENCE IRVING. (Founded on Sheridan Le Fanu's novel of the same name).

Produced at a *matinée* at the Shaftesbury Theatre, on Monday afternoon, February 13th, 1893.

Austin Ruthyn	MR. L. IRVING.	John Knatchbull ..	MR. C. WESTMACOTE.
Silas Ruthyn	MR. W. HAVILAND.	Digby Grist	MR. H. NYE CHART.
Dudley Ruthyn ..	MR. SEYMOUR HICKS.	Pegtop	Master EARLE.
Charke	MR. E. HOLMAN CLARK.	Lady Knollys ..	Miss K. CARLYON.
Wyatt	MR. REYNOLDS.	Maud Ruthyn ..	Miss V. VANBRUGH.
Hon. Harry Chiffinch	MR. E. COVENTRY.	Millicent Ruthyn ..	Miss I. VANBRUGH.
Tom Croft	MR. GORDON CRAIG.	Madame de la Rougière	Miss F. COWELL.
Wilton Ken	MR. T. HESSLEWOOD.		

When Mr. John Douglass produced his version of *Le Fanu's* grisly story at the Standard in October, 1886, he managed to put us in the position of the Fat Boy in "Pickwick," glad to hear something that made our flesh creep. "A Dark Secret," as the play was called, was a thrilling melodrama, full of strong scenes, and ending up with one that kept the nerves tense for a never-to-be-forgotten half-hour of breathless excitement. Moreover, he devised comic and spectacular relief from the horrors which on horror's head accumulate during the infamous career of that fiend in human shape, Uncle Silas by name. The wonderful Henley regatta scene, with its real river, real

boats, puffing steam-launch, and drenching shower, lightened the gloom with a brilliant ray of sunshine; and had the piece enjoyed a West End production, it would assuredly have run a year and made a fortune. With such a stage version in existence, it is not easy to guess at the motive for subjecting the novel to more paste and scissors. Were one of the young authors of the last version a budding Buchanan, or the other a sprouting Sims, the reason would be obvious. There would be a chance for crossing the threshold of popularity as "new and original" dramatists. But alas neither Mr. Hicks nor Mr. Irving is familiar with the 'Ercles vein. Their characters might hail from Alice's Wonderland—so inconsequent, so non-human are they—were it not that the literary qualities displayed render such an origin impossible. A commonplace transcript of familiar thoughts was all that their literary efforts amounted to, and the bloodthirsty wickedness of Uncle Silas, the plots to get Maude's money and then her life, and all the stale business of vile foreign governesses and blackguard boors merely made up a doleful nightmare which provoked ridicule when it was not insufferably dull. Mr. Haviland acted with pathetic sincerity and real force. His gibbering murderer had a touch of the Irvingesque weirdness proper to an actor from the Lyceum. Mr. Hicks represented the clownish lout with conspicuous cleverness. Miss Violet Vanbrugh suffered her persecution with touching resignation and pretty terrors. Miss Irene Vanbrugh as a picturesque combination of rags and innocence scored a genuine hit. And an audience of leading managers and actors appeared delighted with as crude a melodrama as the season has produced.

"ALLENDALE."

A new and original comedy, in three acts, by EDEN PHILPOTTS and G. B. BURGIN.

First produced at the Strand Theatre, on Tuesday afternoon, February 14th, 1893.

Gilbert Crane	Mr. CHARLES GROVES.	Amanda P. Warren ..	Miss EVA MOORE.
Chiggleton Tubbs ..	Mr. WILLIAM WYES.	Letty Crane	Miss K. RUSKIN.
Lorimer Pount	Mr. CAIRNS JAMES.	Mrs. Norton Folgate ..	Miss M. A. VICTOR.
Harry Crane	Mr. J. KNIGHT.	Martha Braddle	Mrs. H. LEIGH.
Ramchunder Jhee ..	Mr. W. E. PHILLIPS.		

Mr. Crane is a person who—for the purposes of comedy, I fear—commits the idiotic blunder of placing a proposal of marriage in the wrong envelope, and thus drawing down upon his head the burning advances of an amorous widow whom he loathes. So terrible a specimen of the race is she, that her thirst is not for the individual, but the species. The paunchy, sheep's-eyed Mr. Tubbs would be clasped to her expansive bosom, or failing him, the young yet cynical proprietor of Pount's Unscented Soap, or possibly her sooty legacy and sacred trust the Hindoo body-servant, Ramchunder Jhee, had she not this hold upon Crane—a hold not to be released, since he is heir to the earldom of Blackpool. With the end of the first act, the last straw is put upon the poor ex-Somerset House clerk's back, for he comes into the title, the tumble-down house and worthless property, and feels the widow's grasp the tighter in consequence. To rid himself of the incubus becomes Crane's one desire, but not even the eccentric Tubbs will take her off his hands—if she would go, and only a course of severe bullying at last extracts from her the incriminating and mis-addressed proposal. Relieved of the widow, Crane's ill-luck deserts him. Coal is found upon his land, his son and daughter who have got stupidly muddled in their love affairs, pair off as their hearts desire, and only the widow and her Hindoo shadow

are left without a finger in the prodigious pie of happiness, ultimately cooked. Of the art of construction the authors know little. Eyes have they and ears also, and these serve them well. Their comic folk are funny, and their simple girls are sweet. But fresh scenic setting and witty dialogue and clear-cut characters are not quite all. Even a farce must hang well together, and that is what this comedy (played as a farce) does not. A little re-arrangement will make it so, however, and then it should have a merry life and a long one. Miss Victor, Mr. Wyse, and Mr. Groves were all as funny as could be. Mr. James, as the seventeen times jilted Pount, suggested a rather unlikely lover for Miss Ruskin's tender-hearted Letty. Miss Moore made a lively Amanda, pretty, sincere, and of a dry humour of which we might see more. And Mr. Knight bore with solemn emphasis upon every sentimental passage in his part.

"FLIGHT."

A new and original play, in four acts, by WALTER FRITH.
First produced at Terry's Theatre, on Thursday evening, February 16th, 1893.

Ralph Sargent	Mr. MURRAY CARSON.	Lord George Bond ..	Mr. H. EVERSFIELD.
Philip Amherst	Mr. H. B. CONWAY.	Collins	Mr. J. BRADBOURNE.
Mr. Thomas Edward ..	} Mr. EDWARD TERRY.	Allen	Mr. H. R. LAMBERT.
Marley		Mrs. Amherst	Miss MAY WHITTY.
Weston Carr	Mr. H. V. ESMOND.	Blanche Templer ..	Miss ANNIE HILL.
Mr. Tanfield	Mr. W. T. LOVELL.	Sylvia Gascoigne ..	Miss HELEN FORSYTH.
Mr. Gascoigne	Mr. T. W. PERCYVAL.		

Upon the receipt of a blow on the head, out in the States, Mr. Amherst's memory takes to flight, and affords Mr. Sargent the chance he awaits of taking to flight too, with such of Mr. Amherst's property as he can lay hands on. There is one coveted bit of it, however, which he has difficulty in securing, namely, Amherst's wife. To pave the way, he tells her that her husband is dead, and on the strength of that they become engaged, when up turns Sargent's father a ticket-of-leave (comic), and immediately afterwards by post from America a woodcock's feather to warn the villain that Amherst is on his track. After several ineffectual interviews between Philip and the ticket-of-leave and his son, the confidence reposed in them by Mr. and Mrs. Amherst (each of whom thinks the other dead) also takes to flight, and is followed by Amherst's idiotic habit of mislaying his memory just when it might be of use to him. Eventually he "sees all," and his wife "sees all," and they meet, and Sargent tries to wing his flight to another world, but is prevented by the ticket-of-leave (whose comicalities have fled, leaving an unsatisfactory residue of tears and bowel-yearnings over his prodigal son) who thinks America will be change enough. Which unconsidered mixture of cleverness and absurdity served as a temporary tomb for the talents of resonant Mr. Carson, unhappy Mr. Conway, clever Mr. Esmond, pretty Miss Forsyth, gentle Miss Whitty, handsome Mr. Lovell, and expectant Mr. Terry, who all worked like slaves in a perfectly hopeless cause—a cause which it was the wonder of onlookers that any actor-manager could ever have espoused.

"DIPLOMACY."

A play, in four acts, adapted by CLEMENT SCOTT and B. C. STEPHENSON from "Dora," by Victorien Sardou.

Revived at the Garrick Theatre, on Saturday evening, February 18th, 1893.

Count Orloff	Mr. BANCROFT.	Henry Beauclerc ..	Mr. JOHN HARE.
Baron Stein	Mr. ARTHUR CECIL.	Dora	Miss KATE RORKE.
Julian Beauclerc ..	Mr. J. F. ROBERTSON.	Countess Zieka ..	Miss O. NETHERSOLE.
Algie Fairfax	Mr. GILBERT HARE.	Marquise de Rio ..	} LADY MONCKTON.
Markham	Mr. R. CATHCART.	Zarès	
Antoine	Mr. E. MAYEUR.	Mion	Miss HELEN LUCK.
Shepherd	Mr. R. POWER.	Lady Henry Fairfax	Mrs. BANCROFT.

Fifteen years ago, in January, 1878, "Diplomacy" was first pro-

duced in England. It was a memorable night, for the Kendals and the Brancrofts, John Clayton, Sugden, and Cecil, constituted a cast impossible to equal in those days, and Sardou was then the one dramatist to whom all eyes were turned. These fifteen years have shattered many idols. Sardou's sun has set. There has risen a race of truer dramatists. French trickery no longer finds a market everywhere in London. Cunning contrivance has had to yield to human character, stage agonies to the suffering of life, and showy tinsel to the rough but serviceable homespun. So, too, with the players. In their ranks, also, these fifteen years have wrought a mighty change. But some there are who can defy change; and to welcome one of them back to the stage an audience representative of the blood and brains of England packed Mr. Hare's theatre this memorable night. Mrs. Bancroft's return is an event of great importance, for in her the traditions of the modern school are vested. The public is not concerned with this. It loved its favourite, loves her still, and shows that love by waiting hours to assist at her return. But if the public is not, the players are. To them it is the coming of a teacher, who can instruct them in comedy, in drama, in what-not. Lady Henry was therefore welcome on all hands. Never mind that she has nothing to do with the play: that her business is indeed to stop it while she now and then gets in a merry laugh. What she has to do is done with such vivacity, the ringing voice is used with such rare skill, the art is at once so telling and so delicate, that sight is lost for awhile of the evening's disappointments. Paper casts, like paper cricket teams, may read wonderfully, but prove something very different. "Diplomacy" was a case in point. Hare, Bancroft, Cecil, Miss Nethersole, Lady Monckton! What a cast—on paper! Who would have dreamed that before the night was half spent, fervent wishes would be breathed for a general shuffling of these (all trump-) cards: wishes for Mr. Bancroft's masterly Henry Beaucherc of 1884, a performance charged with such authority, for the resonant Orloff of Mr. Barrymore and the insinuating Zicka of Mrs. Bernard Beere. Who would have dreamed that before the second act was well begun, before the first of the young actors' opportunities had come, Mr. Forbes Robertson and Miss Rorke had taken the lead, and that the one cry that arose at the end of each act was for them. With the great names of the Kendals against them, with the paralysing consciousness that they were striving against ghosts, against memories with immeasurable power to lay them low, they yet managed to infuse such power and passion into their acting as swept all before them, and carried them on a surging wave of enthusiasm full as high in popular esteem as even the great comedy actress whom the whole theatreful had assembled to honour.

REVIVAL OF "THE GUV'NOR" AT THE VAUDEVILLE, SATURDAY,
JANUARY 28TH, 1893.

Some years ago a clever song writer submitted a very comic song to a gentleman since become famous as a drawing-room entertainer. The song dealt humorously with a very common affliction. It was rejected, sternly, with a dignified reproof, and a statement that the public resented strongly any joking upon such a subject. The writer was troubled by his conscience, but was presently relieved, if not gratified, by the entertainer producing a song on precisely similar lines—"his own composition"—with which he rapidly made

a bigger name and a respectable little fortune. The fact is that the public loves nothing better than humorous treatment of physical infirmities. "The Private Secretary"—and every old farce in which the comedian is maltreated by somebody bigger—is an example of one type of favourite. "The Guv'nor" is an example of the other. In this farce by Mr. Lankester (a pseudonym of Mr. Robert Reece), an old boat-builder is deaf, a confectioner's son stutters. When the latter comes to propose for the daughter of the former, he is understood to be negotiating the purchase of a boat which bears the girl's name. Who cannot conceive the nature of the dialogue? It is *risqué* but irresistible, and shouts of delight attend it. The deafness and stammering are responsible for more. Everyone absurdly mistakes everybody else, and the piece becomes a ridiculous jumble such as any play-wright could arrange in an hour. Acting is not called for. To be effective one has only to be unlike anything in nature, and the work is done. Yet in this revival there is acting, unnecessary though it be. Mr. James's boatman remains what it was in June, 1880, a full-flavoured, breezy old salt, a red-faced, big-voiced, burly, rolling old broad-in-the-beam who brings the scent of the tar in great gusto over the footlights. Mr. E. W. Gardiner as the stutterer, Mr. Reeves Smith as *jeune premier*; Miss May Whitty, Miss Abington, Miss Annie Hughes and Miss Cicely Richards, in parts utterly unworthy of them; and Mr. William Farren, sole possessor of the rich old comedy manner, undergo a kind of painless extinction. There is nothing for them to do. Nor is Miss Sophie Larkin in much better case. Indeed the play is on the shoulders of Mr. James, for whom alone is it worth seeing; for him and for, perhaps, the interest in learning what was popular thirteen years ago.

REVIVAL OF "THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR" AT THE TRAFALGAR-SQUARE,
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH, 1893.

Mr. Graham's farce, produced at a *matinée* in November, and fully noticed at the time, was worthy of the fate it has met. Written with exuberant humour, designed to afford mercurial light comedians, vivacious comediennes, stolid character actors, and pretty *ingénues* a lively setting for their special talents, and filled with timely good-natured chaff of the attitude of Councillors towards music-hall "artistes," it came pat upon the hour and well deserved an invitation to stay. For an excitable gentleman in a fix, there is no one to compare with Mr. Yorke Stephens. His breathless dash and nervous energy carry all before him. Then Fanny Brough is second only to Mrs. John Wood in such parts as Lottie Singleton, the artiste whose attire has been the subject of official remark. Mr. Garden again treats Faddicum, the infatuated Vigilant of the C.C., with natural humour, and Mr. Cyril Maude, with less opportunity than fortune usually strews in his path, shines with chastened lustre as the victimised Cripps. The dunder-headed detective to whom Mr. Hendrie originally gave life and substance could scarcely be expected to wear so vivid a look in any other hands, but Mr. Kinghorne made him effective enough, without banishing remembrances of his predecessor's remarkable performance. Miss Helen Leyton and Miss Gertrude Price fill small parts very capably, and a chilly first-night audience finished by setting a seal of visible approval upon the farce.

[Notices of "The Strike at Arlingford" and "The Master Builder" are unavoidably crowded out.]



MR. IRVING AS LEAR.

Reproduced, by permission, from the Lyceum Souvenir of "King Lear."



MISS ELLEN TERRY AS CORDELIA.

Reproduced, by permission, from the Lyceum Souvenir of "King Lear."

Some Amateur Performances.

"THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW" BY THE STROLLING PLAYERS.

"Man cannot stand—he must advance, or fall, And sometimes falling makes most way of all," was the moral, as Monckton Milnes read it, of Hawthorne's mystic romance of *Monte Beni*. Now, that's all right for Hawthorne—as Miss Moxon would say—and it sounds splendid when laid down as a general principle. It is the sort of saying that would apply all round to every condition of mankind. one in fact to be used, like Beecham's Pills, in every emergency. But it isn't so simple as it seems when, "just for the laugh of the thing"—as Deemster Thorkell puts it—we set to work to apply it to the amateur actor. Whether his last move be in a backward or a forward direction depends entirely—not, like the *joie de vivre*, upon the liver, but upon who the actor may be. What would be a racehorse stride for one is but a halting step for another. It's the old story of one man's meat being another's poison—not that Bronson Howard's drama, with its champion circulation, could be anyone's poison, except perhaps when delivered up to the tender mercies of an exceptionally weak-kneed club, and then the audience would be the principal victims. And who cares what happens to them, once they have been cajoled into taking tickets and mustering in fairly strong numbers? Nay, with its deftly-woven plot, dramatic situations, witty dialogue, and vivid characters, I could name clubs not a few who would make a very appreciable advance with it. But the Strolling Players is not one of them. The ablest of dramatic clubs marks no advance with its latest effort. 'Cos why? It is scarcely an effort to them—it is little more than play, and surely for these players it is high time that, like the doll Nora, they awoke from their dream and realised that play-time is over. What they want is a spice of pluck—something of the stout heart which Latimer recommended to Ridley as they stood together at the stake. They lack the courage to strike out boldly; and if for a moment they venture into deep water, they are back again in the shallows before it is possible to draw breath with which to cheer them on. Since, therefore, they have registered no advance, and no third course is open to them, it becomes a painful duty, as the schoolmaster said in addressing the trembling culprit sent up for chastisement, to chronicle a fall—but a fall in which perhaps (and here comes in the balm!) they make most way, for it has solidified their reputation as actors, and in it they have proved afresh their solid strength and the firmness of their grip. The name of Mr. Arthur Ayers lives in the memory as associated with much brilliant work, but I doubt whether he has done anything truer, or of more genuine worth than Stratton. He may not be at all points the ideal banker—as a matter of fact he is not, weighting the play needlessly in the earlier scenes—but for the force and restraint with which he sustains the later ones, all slighter defects can be overlooked. Miss Florence West, too, proved herself a prop and mainstay as the "airy, fairy Lilian." She put off the light-hearted girl and put on the saddened woman with remarkable ease and skill, the pathos of her fourth act being profoundly penetrating. And Mrs. Arthur Ayers flitted through every scene like a ray of sunshine, making quite twice as much out of flighty Florence as any of her predecessors. For once, Phipps failed to be of solid support. One of those curious freaks of mis-casting which will occasionally befall the best-regulated club had thrown the handkerchief to Mr. Meade, who was never within a mile of realising the Yankee merchant. Mr. Charles Lamb's Carojac only needed a suggestion of the sinister to complete a striking piece of work. Mr. Davies sees Westbrook clearly, and cleverly materialised him, and Mr. Rooth as Babbage was doddery just in the right degree. But the Kenyon of Mr. Roberts was lamentably lacking in fire. Miss Mary Stuart was effective as Aunt Fanny. On the whole, fairly satisfactory, as things go; but do let the Strollers remember that we are waiting for what Phipps' countrymen would call an "eye-opener"—and that we look to them to supply it!

"THE MAGISTRATE" BY THE WHITTINGTON CLUB.

Amateurs are not to be caught napping—at any rate, the majority of those within the five-mile circle. The spirit of competition keeps them actively at work. They for the most part keep their weather-eye open, and firmly fixed upon what to them, is forbidden fruit. And no sooner is the prohibitory "Hands off!" removed than snap go the hungry jaws (just as if they were a flock of birds hovering in wait for the indiscreetly early worm), and then there is a dash and a general scrimmage for the luscious morsel. Pinero has this season been the one to remove the interdiction "Strictly preserved," and great was the consequent jubilation in the tents of the amateur. Scarce an actor who did not in his mind's eye see himself "plucking the laurels from the honoured brow" of Arthur Cecil or Edward Terry—giving Mackintosh points—or showing Eversfield a thing or two. And first in the field was the Whittington, as keenly alive to a good bargain as its enterprising namesake is reported to have been. Nothing ever goes very far wrong with the Whittington. Its name does not often figure where Posket feared to find his wife's—in the list of casualties—and its performance is, as a rule almost up to the level of its promise, which, unless one possesses the Nonconformist conscience so heartily deprecated in Lady Windermere, is all that can be reasonably looked for. Mr. W. T. Clark is a reliable comedian, and may be safely trusted not to play ducks and drakes with his opportunities. His humour would be the richer perhaps for a ray of genial warmth, but he gets his laughs—not in a feeble, trickling stream either, nor yet, be it frankly admitted, in an overwhelming flood, but in a smooth, well-sustained current which puts out of court any suggestion of failure in connection with his impersonation of the Magistrate. Mr. Ernest Trouncer, young and fresh in style as in appearance, played with a refreshing freedom from any taint of self-consciousness, and was more in the vein of the champion fourteen-year-old than any one of the rivals who have followed thick and fast in his footsteps. Lukyn proves rather a tough nut for the teeth of the amateur. The trick of losing his temper is so obviously acquired that it ought to speak volumes for his natural sweetness of disposition. Mr. W. H. Wells is more of an adept in the art than the majority of his fellows, but even his was rather an unconvincing specimen of the home-grown article, and contained not a suspicion of the fine, unforced flavour of the Indian product. Mr. Herbert Walther, well-fitted with the languid and heart-broken Vale, found it an easy matter to be genuinely funny. Quaint touches of humour, dexterously supplied by Mr. Guennell, enriched Bullamy. There is no amateur Mrs. John Wood, so a demand for one would be about as fruitful of result as a call for a *table d'hôte* repast in the desert of Sahara. In wisely accepting, therefore, the goods provided by the gods—in this case, represented by the committee of the club—we accept a very distinct good in the shape of Miss Julia FitzGibbon, who not only has an excellent appreciation of Mrs. Posket's humour, but a very effective method of emphasising it. Miss Aimée Adams was vivacious, as Charlotte should be, and Messrs. Moore, Marcus, Graves, FitzGibbon, Webster, and Dashper, together with the Misses Stewart and Smart, all laboured according to their lights, which were of varying value, ranging from the dazzling electric to the humble night-light. The proceeds of Sir Charles Young's curtain-raiser, "The Baron's Wager," which practically ran into unlimited applause, were fairly divided between Mrs. Evans, sweet and winning as ever, and Mr. Charles Dickinson, throughout easy, natural, and on the best of terms with his part.

"THE MAGISTRATE" BY THE ROMANY CLUB.

"Richard's himself again!"—and so is the Romany. After my recent visit to St. George's Hall there's not the faintest possible, probable shadow of doubt on that score. At last it has shaken off the Rip Van Winkle-like drowsiness which for some time has been weighing down its eye-lids, and from which it only partially awakened at intervals to propound some antediluvian problem which could be of no possible interest to anyone of less antiquity than Noah. But now it bestirs itself; like Wordsworth's irritatingly simple child, "it feels its life in every limb" (can anyone have administered a galvanic shock?), and makes a gallant effort to get abreast of the times with a strongly-cast, admirably-balanced performance of Pinero's farce—farce, the dramatist calls it, though I

fancy that, bearing in mind his own dictum that in the course of years farce ripens into comedy, he has skilfully provided a firmer claim to its future title than many a hall-marked comedy possesses. And it is as comedy that Mr. Bright, cleverly reading, like Mrs. Posket, between the lines, sees the direful dilemmas of the distressed Magistrate. Recognising that it's nine-tenths of the way towards turning out a ridiculous tragedy (with apologies to Mrs. Clifford), he sets himself to prove his case, and, poised on the border-line of tragi-comedy, inclining now to one side and anon to the other, with a balance which would go far towards making the fortune of a Blondin, he weaves a piece of rich, rare comedy with an adroitness which awakens in equal measure surprise and admiration. There are Poskets galore—Poskets good, bad, and indifferent, and Poskets whom the dramatist cannot have pictured in his wildest dreams. Which is the real one? Where is the true one? Who shall say! The author presumably would be able to pick out that one who came closest to fulfilling his ideal, could the various aspirants be placed before him in a line, on the principle of criminal identification. In the meantime, not only for agility and alertness, but for force, Mr. Bright holds his own with the best of them, and when it comes to a question of cleverness of conception he "romps in" easily first. Shoulder to shoulder his comrades stand by him with scarce a weak point in their harness where the arrows of criticism may take effect. Mr. Trevor Lloyd is not fitted by nature for Cis, so he starts more heavily handicapped than Mr. Trouncer, but, well-stocked with an inexhaustible fund of spivits, he grapples with and overcomes most of the obstacles in his path. Mr. Walkes proves a sturdier pillar to the second act than any Lukyn I have seen, the nervous irritability being most effectively worked up, and the Captain Horace Vale of Mr. Biddulph Butler is the finished piece of light-comedy which that painstaking actor has taught us to expect. Messrs. Sowton and Hill supply sketches which are successful contrasts to Mr. Bright's, and Mr. Trollope plays Wyke as no one else could play him. Mrs. Walkes is a Mrs. Posket of surprising bulk and richness of humour, and Mrs. Charles Sim is irresistibly funny as Charlotte. The Misses Norton and Wallace are lively in smaller parts, and Messrs. Birch-Reynardson, Tulloh, Montgomery, Duplex, and Janson are content to fill in the chinks with artistic work.

"SCHOOL" AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL.

"I may not choose my fare—I only wish I might," sings the hapless critic, with a longing glance at the dramatic dainties of which the amateur will not give him a taste. He humbly hints that a draught of Sardou, a touch of Pinero, a morsel of Grundy, a suggestion of Jones would not be unacceptable. But to no purpose! The autocratic amateur disposes of him after the summary fashion of the landlord in the Far West ("I'll take truffled larks," remarks the traveller glancing down the bill of fare. "You'll eat hash," calmly responds the landlord covering him with his revolver.) And in time the cowering critic learns to think himself in luck if he only gets his hash satisfactorily served. After all, though, perhaps it is just as well that he gets a disappointment now and again. It serves to clip the wings of his soaring spirit, and by force of contrast teaches him to see, with the moralising Duke in the Forest of Arden, good in (almost) everything. Hence in addition to swelling the funds of St. Pancras Parish Church, that most unschooled "School" may serve as wholesome discipline to one, at least. A hash of watery sentiment and would-be cynicism is not an especially appetising dish even when served up by a master hand, but substitute for that the unimaginative work of dire inexperience unaided by any guiding finger of sufficient strength to make its presence apparent, and unrelieved insipidity is the order of the evening. Unrelieved, I said in my haste; but there was relief, slight perhaps, but I would not that it should be "cast into the endless shade" of oblivion. There was the Naomi of Miss Ethel Cock. That was like a draught of champagne in its sparkling vivacity. Then there was the Beau of Mr. Kenyon Bright, an elaborate and consistent bit of work. That was interesting. There was the languid and nonchalant Poyntz of Mr. Cecil Mount. There was the merriest, sauciest school, composed of Miss Kate Cock and the Misses Gwyther, Pounceby, Clulow, Carter, and Pezze. That was a vivid patch of sunlight. The love-making between Miss Towle—altogether out of place as an *ingénue*—and Mr. Clifford Probyn, was as wearisome for the on-

lookers as the genuine thing is apt to be, away from the footlights. Mr. Frank Simon's conception of the Doctor was curious, but not without interest. Starting as a comparatively young and vigorous man, he put on age with a rapidity which was absolutely startling—at the rate of something like twenty years to an act. At the fall of the curtain, the Beau was practically nowhere in point of “dodder,” as compared with him. I do not question the subtlety of this conception, but I still search vainly for its significance. Mrs. Thoulless was never within a mile of Mrs. Sutcliffe, and Mr. Percival Sharpe, as the impossible usher, displayed a keen sense of the ludicrous, in what proved to be an amusing burlesque of Quilp.

“THE BELLS” AND “MAMMA’S OPINIONS” AT ST. GEORGE’S HALL.

If Mr. Glossop Such's brother amateurs do not rise as one man, and testify their appreciation of the service he has rendered them by an appropriate gift of laurels, he will indeed be entitled to join hands with the cynic who swore that the word gratitude being obsolete, no longer figured in the dictionary. For Mr. Such has done the amateurs' cause yeoman service by a deed of noble self-sacrifice. For the general good he consents to become a pioneer—and pioneers, whether they be Galileos, Brunos, Ibsens, or merely advocates of the divided skirt, are bound to get all the kicks and none of the half-pence; for which reason their lot like that of Gilbert's policeman “is not a happy one.” “Somebody must be last” remarked the school girl when reproached for her tardiness; and somebody must also be first, Mr. Such might plead with equally sound logic. And whoever was first in this particular instance, had to stand up shoulder to shoulder with a giant. No getting away from the fatal words—“Not so bad if you don't think of Irving, is it?” But then we do think of him! We can think of nothing else, for we know but one Mathias. And against the memory of that haunting figure, all Mr. Such's genuine hard work, ability above the average, blood-curdling shrieks, and sardonic laughter (Query: Were the shrieks and laughter responsible for his assuming the part?) went for absolutely nothing. But why discuss the subject? Mr. Such has served his turn. His reward is not now, and if he be a philosophical pioneer he will have taken a leaf from the small boy's note-book, and rendered himself impervious to the kicks. As I said at the outset, it has been his work to erect such a standard (no jest implied) as amateurs may be measured against without coming heavily to the ground. And now, doubtless, they will come on apace. “Next, please!” Miss Hall Caine, charmingly tender and sympathetic as Annette, flitted through the play like a sunbeam. Miss Carr, not altogether at her ease, made a motherly Catherine, and Miss Wynn as Sozel, erred on the side of over-colouring. Mr. Wallis proved but a wooden Christian, and Mr. Kersley a worse than wooden Walter. Mr. Taylor played Hans with quiet humour, and Mr. Kenyon Bright, if too restless, put thought and intention into his version of the Doctor. Mr. Mannering was effective as the Mesmerist, but Mr. Chaplin as the President seemed bored. Perhaps he, too, was thinking of the Lyceum. And the play lacked nothing that the brain of stage-manager could devise for its success. The novelty of the evening was supplied by “Mamma's Opinions.” In that it deals with love, it yields to the inevitable law of the drama. In that it is provided with a background of politics—not a “bauble” but a stump-orating background, be it noted, in which “Mamma” plays a prominent part—it is both fresh and clever. “Mamma's” daughter is in love with the son of her political opponent *à la* “Romeo and Juliet.” But Miss Capulet Gadabout is not a maiden of the latter end of the Victorian era for nothing. She strives to bridge over the difficulty by inducing Mr. Romeo Primrose to adopt mamma's opinions. This he is quite prepared to do, being burdened with no superfluous prejudices of his own. But mamma's opinions are “variable as the shade.” This complicates matters. Being discovered in the house, Romeo is introduced to Mamma in the guise of an “interviewer.” The deception is exposed, but Mamma's wrath is forestalled by a spirited declaration of independence on the part of her daughter. “Mamma's Opinions” are unclaimed, but so rich a flavour of the Shrieking Sisterhood clings to the stump-orating Mamma—a flavour every atom of which is brought out by Miss Carlingford—that the finger points with no uncertain aim in the direction of Mrs. Lynn Linton. The lovers were played by Miss Wynn with brightness and vivacity, and by Mr. Poel with the driest humour.

Notes of the Month.

LORD CAMPBELL'S "Lives of the Lord Chancellors," was said to add a new terror to death, and by the verdict in the recent case, *Melford v. Madge*, dramatic critics have had a new terror launched at their devoted heads. The very name of the play in question, "The Hidden Terror," is ominously suggestive. The case itself may not appear to the lay mind to be of much importance, nor indeed would lawyers consider it a "leading case," yet to the profession it will rank perhaps as a *cause célèbre*. It certainly deals a severe blow to the freedom of dramatic criticism in the press. The case hinged on the conventional interpretation of a certain sentence. Mr. Melford's play was said "to be hooted off the stage" on the first night, whereas, as a matter of fact, it had a run of a fortnight. Such a phrase is of course understood by every playgoer as being no more than a vigorous and figurative assertion of the fact that the play was universally damned. No one but a jurymen could possibly suppose that this phrase was intended for a literal statement of fact. What play is actually "hooted off the stage?" But a British jury resents metaphors. In future, if a critic desires to indulge in the mildest flight of verbal imagery, he will be careful, following the example of Artemus Ward, to append a footnote, "this is rote sarcastick." In the interest of newspaper readers it is to be hoped that this unfortunate decision will not tend to foster undue self-restraint and pusillanimous moderation in dramatic criticism among some of our critics, whose dread of being twitted with an emotional style induces them to adopt a neutral and colourless tone of criticism, as futile in its results, as it is tame and uninteresting in the reading.

THE English version of Henrik Ibsen's new play, "The Master Builder," translated by Mr. Edmund Gosse and Mr. William Archer, has been published by Mr. Heinemann. It is a drama in three acts. There is no particular plot, the main part of the play being occupied with dialogues between Solness and Hilda. The play was produced at the Trafalgar Square Theatre on Monday afternoon, February 20th, and was successful mainly on account of the good acting.—From the same publisher we have received Mr. Pinero's new volume of Plays, "Dandy Dick," which is turned out in the excellent style usual with this firm.

WHEN "Ma Mie Rosette" has come to an end at the Prince of Wales's Theatre Messrs. Lart and Boosey intend making a trial of a "triple bill." Their programme will consist of "Vesta's Temple," an "absurdity" produced some years back at the Globe and elsewhere; "Columbine," a one-act music-play, in which Messrs. Oudin and Courtice Pounds will figure as Pierrot and Harlequin respectively; and "More Than Ever," a melodramatic burlesque by the late Arthur Matthison, which filled the Gaiety during Mr. John Hollingshead's management.

MR. BOOSEY'S morning ballad concert on the 2nd February was one of the most successful of the series. The vocalists were Miss Margaret Macintyre, Mr. Ben Davies, Madame Belle Cole, Mr. Santley, Madame Antoinette Sterling and Mr. David Bispham, and the instrumentalist Mr. Septimus Webbe, a rising pianist, who played with brilliant effect Godard's Mazurka in B flat. The programme of the concert was composed mainly of the works of Sir Arthur Sullivan, and all the artists mentioned greatly distinguished themselves; Madame Sterling's rendering of the evergreen "Lost Chord" being received with enthusiasm. Miss Mary Davies of late shows an increasing tendency to sing songs that can only in justice be described as mournful. Mr. Eaton Fanning's highly-trained choir sang some beautiful part songs.

ABOUT 400 gentlemen sat down at the Criterion Restaurant at the ninth annual dinner of the Playgoers' Club, and were presided over by Mr. Carl Hentschel. The company included Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. S. B. Bancroft, Mr. G. R. Sims, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, and many well-known playgoers. The programme comprised, besides speeches, an excellent musical entertainment. The toast of "The Playgoers' Club" having been proposed by Mr. H. A. Jones and responded to by the Chairman, Dr. Edward Aveling in an effective speech submitted the toast of "The Drama," coupled with the name of Mr. Henry Irving, who, on rising to reply, was greatly applauded:

MR. IRVING said: The form which this toast has taken puts me in a position of some embarrassment. For an actor to respond for the drama seems like an invasion of the privileges of this club. It is true that the gentleman who has proposed this toast with so much eloquence and so many kindly expressions towards myself has invited me to speak for the drama, but that makes me feel like a poacher who sees the owner of the preserves removing the notice that trespassers will be prosecuted, with an ostentatious smile. (Laughter.) It is not without trepidation that I have accepted your delightful hospitality to-night. I knew I should find myself in the presence of a committee, a very large committee of experts. (Laughter.) In one of your recent discussions I believe a gentleman who had written a play complained very bitterly that it had been sat upon by sixty-nine critics. (Laughter.) I don't know that my case to-night may not be even worse, for I am here to receive judgment from about 400 critics, every one of whom, I have no doubt, has all my shortcomings in his mind's eye, from the very outset of my career. If I remember rightly—and if not, I am sure you, sir, will correct me—400 was the number of the priests of Baal who cut themselves with knives to propitiate their deity. (Great laughter.) But amongst the high priests of criticism this surgical operation is differently managed—and, as a man who has had in his time some personal experience of the process, I cheerfully admit that it illustrates the progress of the humane arts. (Laughter.) Well, gentlemen, while I am on the subject of the drama, which you will observe I am handling in the most gingerly, not to say evasive manner—(laughter)—there is one little secret of which I will unburden my soul. When it was first suggested by some of your members that the Playgoers' Club would like to see me in my habit as I live, to drop their swords and daggers and entertain me with a little amicable cutlery, I said to myself, "This will never do. I bide my time"—of course an actor always soliloquises like that—(laughter)—"till I have produced an original play. (Cheers.) I cannot stand before the Playgoers' Club, all of them critics, and some of them playwrights, unless I am backed by an original drama at the Lyceum." There, gentlemen, you have the real history of "Becket." (Loud and prolonged cheers.) If I were to obtain public confidence by lavish promises, I ought to hint that any new play which may be sent to me will be produced with the utmost neatness and despatch. (Cheers and laughter.) But fictitious bribes of that kind will not do in this atmosphere of vigilant independence. I have not studied your debates without discovering that the Playgoers' Club is the real Palace of Truth. (Laughter.) They are distinguished by a wholesome candour, which, owing to the artificial construction of society, cannot, I am sorry to say become universal, but it has the excellent effect of circulating fresh air, though I must admit that even after breathing many exhilarating whiffs I find that my position to-night in the very centre of the ventilator is almost too stimulating. (Laughter.) For all that, gentlemen, I am

glad to meet you on the common ground of good-fellowship, because we are pursuing the same ideal. (Cheers.) The very existence of your club is based on the conviction that the drama, and the interpretation of the drama, are rare and difficult arts, and not the mere distractions of an empty hour. (Cheers.) I notice that in the breadth of your tolerance you have lately found room for a gentleman who favoured you with a dissertation on the shocking immorality of the stage. (Laughter.) In course of time I daresay you will listen to some scribe who will tell you that the actor's calling is inconsistent with the dignity of manhood. (Laughter.) I do not allude to these theories, however, in any spirit of reproach, but simply to illustrate the extraordinary comprehensiveness of your institution. (Cheers.) It cannot be said that the Playgoers' Club suffers from a limited horizon, and it is no doubt your determination to help the drama in holding the mirror up to nature which prompts you to take eccentric philosophers by the hand and encourage them to fret their little hour upon your stage. (Cheers and laughter.) Perhaps in this respect I may be of some assistance to the club, for I am generally in active correspondence with people of original mind—(laughter)—who survey the drama from points of view which would never occur to you and me—(laughter and cheers)—and to whom it would be a real charity to offer the intoxicating joy of publicity. (Laughter.) There is a certain worthy who, after assailing the stage in the cloth of one religious body, has now donned the garb of another, and I should not be surprised to find that his change of creed has given a new stimulus to an inveterate prejudice. (Laughter.) I really think you ought to secure his services as an entertainer—and you will understand how disinterested is this suggestion when I tell you he has the lowest, the most degraded opinion of myself. (Laughter.) But, gentlemen, amidst these diversions you are doing a great deal to maintain a cultivated interest in the drama and a spirit of honest criticism. I have not come here to flatter you, though it is said to be a large part of an actor-manager's business to ensnare the simple-minded critic in sinister toils. (Laughter.) I acquit you of any desire to cajole me with your chicken and champagne—(laughter)—to the unimpeachable excellence of which permit me to pay a passing tribute. (Laughter.) I do not hesitate to tell you that there have been times when the genius of frankness which possesses this club has not appeared to me to be allied with the finest discrimination. (Laughter.) But putting aside any prepossessions to which the imperfections of the artist make him prone, I should like to recognise in the most cordial spirit the genuine devotion to dramatic art by which your club is animated. Believe me, amidst the cares and responsibilities which attach to the management of a theatre—and there are just as many cares and anxieties in the management of a theatre as in any other calling—(cheers)—it is no small recompense to know that the true aim you have cherished all your life, the ideal which stands far above even the greatest commercial success, and which none but the artist in his inmost soul knows how hard it is even to approach, is not forgotten amidst the chorus of praise or of blame which attend his efforts. (Loud cheers.) Most generous words have been uttered at your table to-night about my work as an actor and a manager. I claim no privilege unless it be the privilege of antiquity—(laughter)—which belongs to the old red playbill that has figured outside the house in Wellington Street for so many years. (Renewed laughter.) How much longer that familiar ensign will brave the battle and the breeze I cannot say: but this I can say, and from my heart, that from the younger as well as the older generation of playgoers I have received the greatest sympathy and aid, and that the whole dramatic profession looks to such an organisation as yours for constant counsel and support. (Loud cheers.)

MR. W. J. HOLLOWAY, the subject of one of our photographs this month, is a Londoner by birth, but has lived all his life in Australia, ever since his parents took him with them to Sydney, in 1852, he being then a boy of nine. He was educated at the Grammar School in Sydney, and was designed at first for the profession of Civil Engineering, but his devotion to Shakespeare and fondness for private theatricals were such as to make the profession inevitable which he joined in 1866. He made his first appearance in Brisbane, Queensland, in the part of Baron Steinfort in "The Stranger," returning afterwards to Sydney, where he was given an engagement by the late Mr. William Hoskins, well known once in England as Phelps' first comedian at Sadler's Wells. Mr. Holloway rapidly became a favourite in all the great towns in Australia, especially as a Shakespearian actor, and in 1878 became manager of a company

"THE THEATRE," MARCH, 1893.



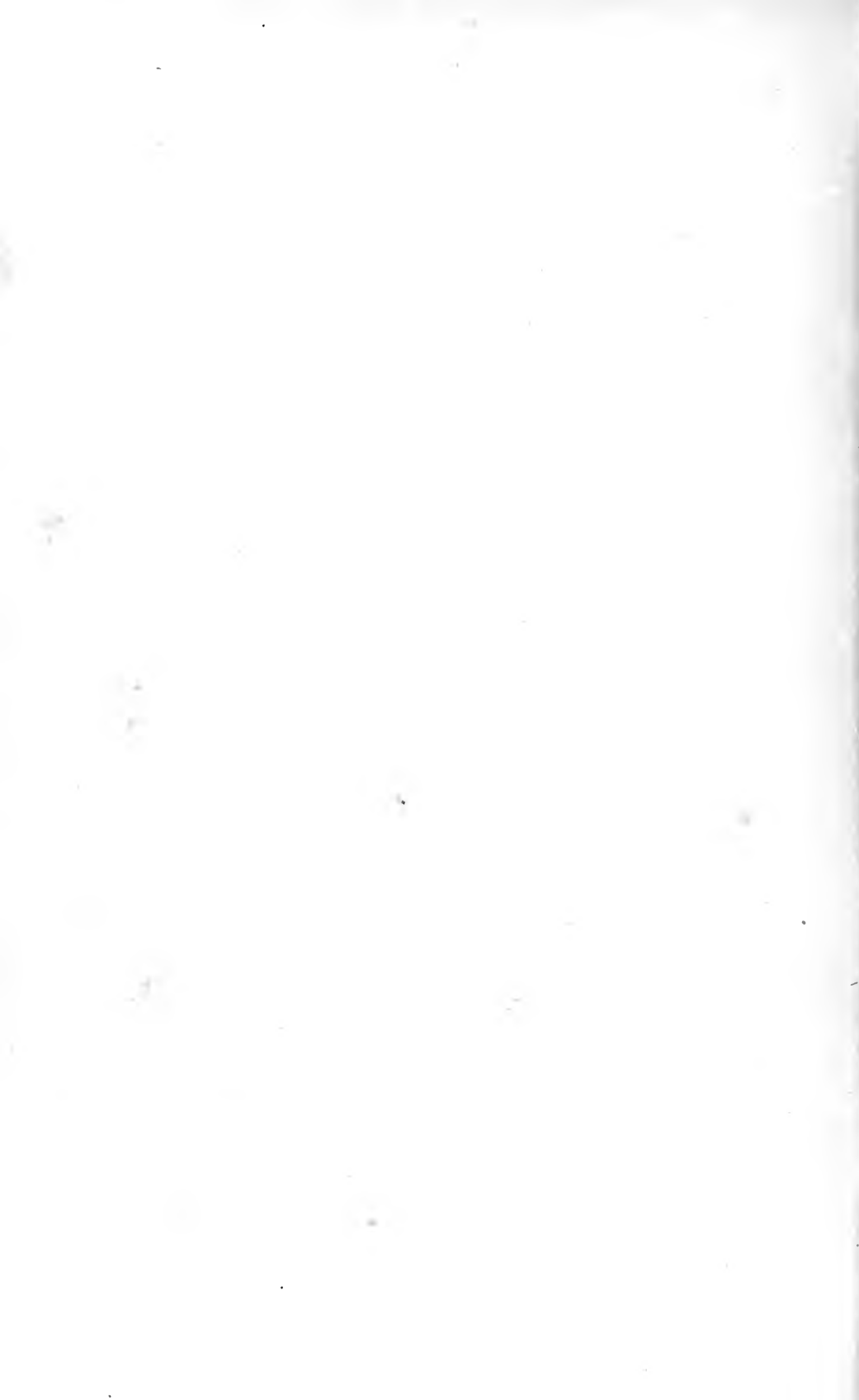
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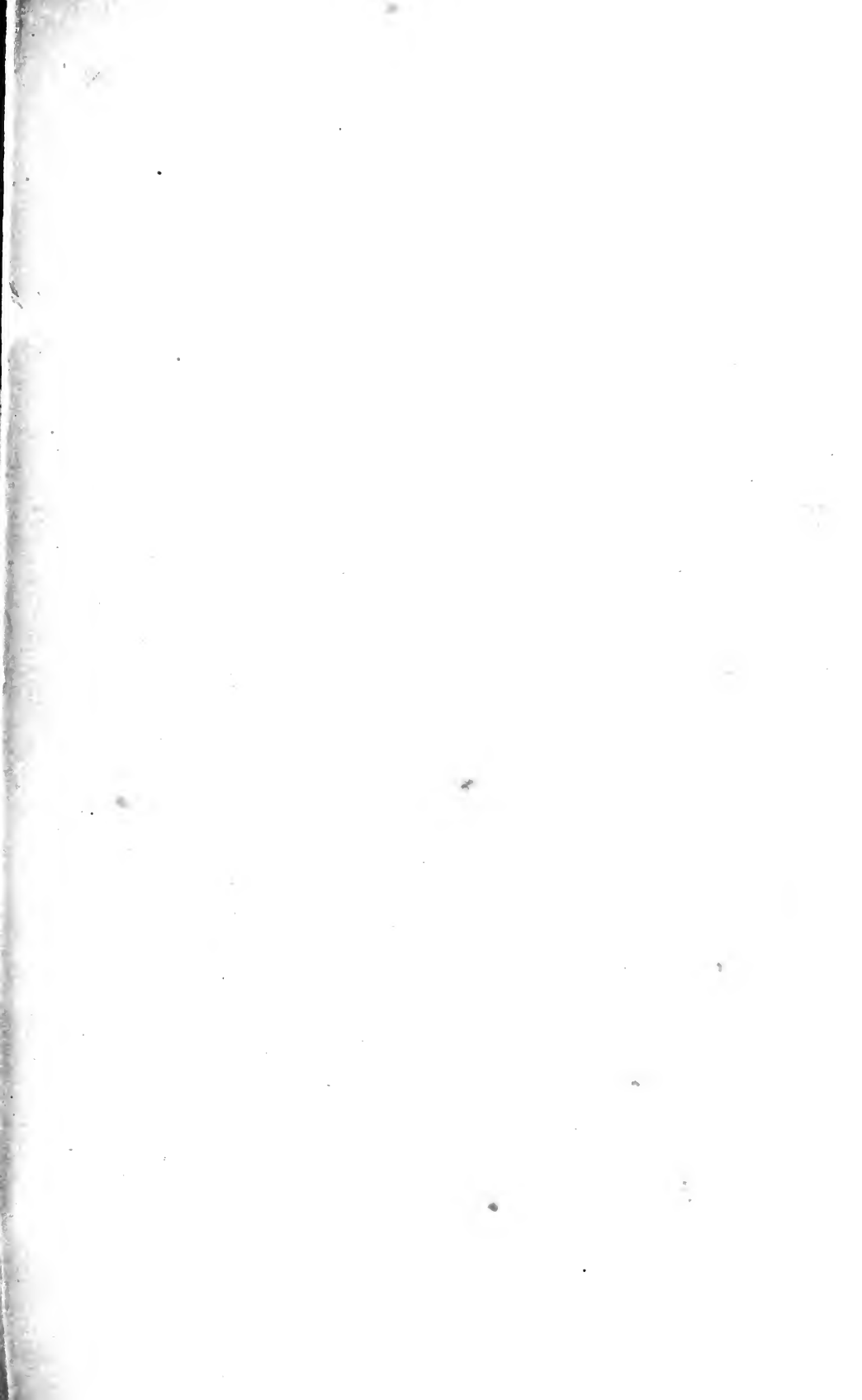
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MR. W. J. HOLLOWAY.

"When I am known aright, you shall not grieve lending me this acquaintance."

KING LEAR.







Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N. W.

GROUP FROM "HYPATIA."

MR. H. BEERBOHM TREE, MR. LEWIS WALLER AND MISS JULIA NEILSON.

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which achieved a very marked success. In 1884 he was able to allow himself a trip "home" (*i.e.*, to England), for purposes of rest and enjoyment, but on his return to Australia, took up his professional work with so much ardour that in 1889 overwork had completely prostrated him, and his doctor sent him to England again, declaring that it was essential for him to go and live in a more bracing climate. Mr. Holloway had happily "made his pile," and had already been thinking of retiring from his profession, and accordingly came to London three years ago without any intention of again treading the boards. But with restored health came back the desire for work, and an engagement being offered him to play Kent at the Lyceum by Mr. Irving—for whose acting he had conceived a very high admiration—he made a reappearance as an actor when the curtain rose last year on "King Lear." Then came the memorable occasion when—having studied the part at a few hours notice only—he played Lear as substitute for Mr. Irving, and at once took a high place in England as an actor. The magnitude of the feat performed may be gauged by the fact that Mr. Holloway was never even asked to do more than to read the part, so entirely impossible was it considered that anyone could be found to play it. Mr. Holloway took the part for three or four nights, and afterwards played it on alternate nights to the end of the run of "Lear," his understudy taking Kent on the nights when he played the King. In "Becket" Mr. Holloway has the part of Edward Grim; but it is always felt that his playing of a minor part is the less important service he is rendering, and that his great value lies in his ability to worthily replace on emergency any member of the company however eminent.—The remaining photograph is a group of characters from the successful play "Hypatia," now running at the Haymarket Theatre, containing portraits of Mr. Beerbohm Tree, Mr. Lewis Waller, and Miss Julia Neilson.

"Katrina," the new ballet, produced at the Empire Theatre on Monday, February 20th, is a great success. Mr. Leopold Wenzel has written the music, which throughout is very bright. The scenery is very creditable and the appointments in excellent taste, and we have no doubt that the ballet will run well into the summer months.

THE Oxford Music Hall, entirely rebuilt, has opened its doors with an excellent programme, including all the music-hall "stars," which the management apparently shares with those bright places of amusement, the Tivoli and the Pavilion.

MR. PINERO'S new comedy, described as a "whimsical play," will be produced at the Court Theatre in about a fortnight. It is a modern play, but the story has many fantastic elements in it quite distinct from the author's other plays.

"Hypatia" has already reached its fiftieth representation, and is likely to enjoy a very extended lease of popularity. Mr. Ogilvie has sold the German rights of the play, and the translation will be undertaken by Dr. Heinrich Geehl.

THE Whittington Dramatic Society which, by-the-bye, is one of the oldest in London, intend producing on Saturday, March 4th, an en-

tirely new and original play, written by Mr. M. H. Spier, and entitled "Griffith Murdoch."

AN original comediotta, "Jones & Co.," by Clifton Bingham, was produced at the Public Hall, Croydon, on February 4th. Although slight in incident, and consequently in interest, the trifle met with a good reception; and Mr. Bingham may certainly be advised to try his hand again upon something more ambitious.

MUSICAL NOTES.

THE great musical event of the past month has been, of course, the production at Milan of Verdi's "Falstaff." Criticism is unanimous in its opinion as to the freshness and spontaneity of the music. The hand of the maestro has not lost any of its cunning, and has given the world, at an age when most composers bethink themselves of laying down the pen, a masterpiece. It will be curious to note the reception the new work obtains in London; whether it will be a second "Cavalleria." It is safer, perhaps, not to prophesy. Musical taste is a variable quantity.

GORING THOMAS'S unfinished opera, "The Golden Web," has been produced by the Carl Rosa Opera Co. at Liverpool. As it will be heard in London at Easter, at the Lyric Theatre, little need be said at present concerning it. It is said to be melodious and bright, with that touch of French, characteristic of its composer.

IN the new version of "La Rosière" compressed into two acts, the improbable is made probable by the donning, by the heroes and heroines, of veils and masks. But this cannot make the story of the opera anything but ancient; and Mr. Jakobowski's music is scarcely good enough to redeem the antiquity of the plot.

One of the best little theatre-orchestras in London at the present time is that at the Trafalgar Square, where Messrs. Yorke Stephens and Garden are playing "The County Councillor." Mr. Arthur E. Godfrey is responsible for its excellence, as well as for the well-selected programme.

Senor Sarasate's last concert took place on the 10th, when St. James's Hall overflowed, as usual. Madame Bertha Marx was the pianist.

The Council of the Chicago Exhibition have invited Dr. Hans Richter to conduct a short series of orchestral concerts in July and August.

Musically, there is nothing doing. Concerts are plentiful enough, but the political strain and the general sense of financial instability affect the musical world more than the theatrical—and theatrical business has not been any too brisk.

"Haddon Hall" at the Savoy seems to pursue the even tenour of its way, without much effort. But Mr. D'Oyly Carte's theatre is fortunate in one respect, that it commands a great provincial and country *clientèle*, which considers its plain duty when "up in town" is to visit the Lyceum, the Savoy, and the Moore and Burgess Minstrels.



New Plays

PRODUCED AND IMPORTANT REVIVALS in London, from January 20th, 1893,
to February 20th, 1893 :—

(*Revivals are marked thus °*)

- Jan. 20 "Over the Way," comedietta, in one act, by T. W. Robertson.
Court.
- " 21 "The Sportsman," farcical comedy in three acts, adapted from the
French of Georges Feydeau, by W. Lestocq. Comedy.
- " 21 "A Welsh Heiress," comedietta, in one act, by Tom Cullum.
Comedy.
- " 23 "A Tale in a Tub," farce, in one act, by F. R. Reiss. (Produced by
Amateurs). Ladbroke Hall.
- " 26 "Roses of Shadow," piece, in one act, by André Raffalovich.
Athenæum, Tottenham Court Road.
- " 26 "The Bauble Shop," play, in four acts, by Henry Arthur Jones.
Criterion.
- " 28° "The Guv'nor," comedy, in three acts, by E. P. Lankester.
- " 30 "Mamma's Opinions," comedietta, in one act, author unannounced.
Performed by amateurs. St. George's Hall.
- Feb. 1 "Bartonmere Towers," comedy, in three acts, by Rutland Barrington.
Matinée. Savoy.
- " 4 "Written in Sand," comedietta, in one act, by F. W. Broughton
Trafalgar Square.
- " 4° "The County Councillor," farce, in three acts, by H. Graham.
Trafalgar Square.
- " 6 "Becket," play, in a prologue and four acts, by Alfred Lord Tenny-
son. Lyceum.
- " 6° "Rosedale," comedy-drama, in five acts, by Lester Wallack, revised
by Charles Arnold. Parkhurst.
- " 7° "A Desperate Deed," drama, in three acts, by Burford Delannoy.
Sadler's Wells.
- " 9 "An Underground Journey," comedietta, in one act, by Mrs. Hugh
Bell and Chas. H. Brookfield. *Matinée.* Comedy.
- " 13 "Uncle Silas," drama, in four acts, founded upon the novel of
Sheridan Le Fanu, by Seymour Hicks and Lawrence Irving.
Shaftesbury.
- " 13 "Letters Addressed Here," farce, in one act, by H. Chance Newton.
Shaftesbury.
- " 13° "The Colleen Bawn," Dion Boucicault's drama in five acts. Lyric,
Hammersmith.
- " 14 "Allendale," comedy, in three acts, by Eden Philpotts and G. B.
Burgin. *Matinée.* Strand.
- " 16 "Flight," play, in four acts, by Walter Frith. Terry's.
- " 18° "Diplomacy," comedy, in three acts, adapted from the French of
Victorien Sardou, by B. C. Stephenson and Clement Scott.
Garrick.
- " 20 "The Master Builder," play, in three acts, translated from the Norse
of Henrik Ibsen, by William Archer and Edmund Gosse. *Matinée.*
Trafalgar Square.
- " 20° "The Prodigal Daughter," drama, in four acts, by Henry Pettitt and
Sir Augustus Harris. Grand.
- " 20 "Katrina" *ballet divertissement* in two *tableaux*, by Mme. Katti
Lanner, music by Leopold Wenzel. Empire.

In the Provinces, from January 10th to February 20th, 1893 :—

- Jan. 19 "The Scapegrace," drama, by Wynn Miller. Amphitheatre, Ramsgate.

- Jan. 19 "The Competitors ; or, The Nymph of Nozenaro," comic opera, in two acts, by Sidney Cubitt, composed by Thomas Hackwood. (Produced by amateurs). Subscription Rooms, Stroud.
- " 25 "Aladdin at Sea," extravaganza, in one act, by I. Zangwill. Public Rooms, Camborne.
- " 30 "Spectres of the Past," play, consisting of a drama and a burlesque, by J. W. Whitbread. Queen's, Dublin.
- " 30 "The Burglar Alarm and the Detective Camera," drama, by John Gannon. Adelphi, Liverpool.
- " 30 "A Free Pardon," dramatic sketch, in one act. Author unannounced. Queen's, Poplar.
- Feb. 1 "Our Play," comedietta, in one act, by R. G. Graham, Teddington Town Hall.
- " 1 "The Fire Alarm," farce, in one act, by R. G. Graham. Teddington Town Hall.
- " 2 "The Heiress of Maes-y-Felin ; or, the Flower of Mandoverly," play, in five acts, by A. H. Ward. Victoria, Merthyr Tydfil.
- " 4 "The Fay o' the Fern," fantastical farce, in one act, by Robert George Legge. New, Oxford.
- " 4 "Jones and Co., Matrimonial Agents," comedietta, in one act, by Clifton Bingham. Public Hall, Croydon.
- " 7 "Lansdown Castle ; or, The Sorcerer of Tewkesbury," comic operetta by Major A. C. Cunningham, composed by Gustav von Holst. (Produced by amateurs). Corn Exchange, Cheltenham.
- " 8 "His Last Cruise," operetta, in one act, by R. T. Gunton. Music composed and selected by W. Williams. Public Hall, Hatfield.
- " 8 "Monica," dramatic sketch, in one act, by J. W. Swarbreck. Public Hall, Hatfield.
- " 15 "The Golden Web," comic opera, in three acts, by B. C. Stephenson and F. Corder, music by A. Goring Thomas. Royal Court, Liverpool.
- " 20 "The Shadow of Sin," drama, in five acts, by Frederick Jarman. Theatre Royal, Hanley.
- " 20 "King for a Day," romantic opera, in three acts, adapted from Adolphe Adam's "Si J'étais Roi," by Valentine Smith. Art Gallery Hall, Newcastle.

In Paris, from January 18th to February 15th, 1893.

- Jan. 19 "L'Invitée," comedy, in three acts, by François de Curel. Vaudeville.
- " 21 "La Fille à Blanchard," drama, in five acts, by MM. Darmont and Humblot. Odéon.
- " 27 "Mère et Martyre," drama, in five acts and seven tableaux, by Paul Daigremont. Ambigu.
- " 30 "Madame Chrysanthème," opera, in four acts, adapted for the stage from the novel of Pierre Loti, by Georges Hartmann and André Alexandre, music by M. Messager. Renaissance-Lyrique.
- Feb. 2 "Le Premier Mari de France," comédie-vaudeville, in three acts, by Albin Valabregue. Variétés.
- " 8 "La Veglione," comedy, in three acts, by Alexandre Bisson and Albert Carré. Palais-Royal.
- " 9 "L'Argent d'Autrui," comedy, in five acts, by Léon Hennique. Odéon.
- " 10 "Les Amants Légitimes," comedy, in three acts, by Ambroise Janvier and Marcel Ballot. Gymnase.
- " 15 "Le Devoir," piece, in four acts, by Louis Bruyère. (For the Théâtre Libre). Menus-Plaisirs.



THE THEATRE.

APRIL, 1893.

The Evolution of the "Bauble Shop."



HENRY ARTHUR JONES is a very clever gentleman ; he is also a popular playwright ; and, what is more, a conscientious craftsman, inspired by lofty ideals and governed by well-matured theories. Of this we can have no doubt whatever, for we have Mr. Jones's personal assurances of its truth. He has bestowed much thought upon the Drama, and—generous creature that he is—is ever ready, on the slightest provocation, to give to the expectant world some golden nuggets from the rich store-house of his brain. To the enterprising interviewer he is an easy prey, and as he paces up and down the room (why is it that the interviewed are invariably represented as indulging in the habits of the caged lion ?) he will furnish remunerative "copy" by the yard, on two most interesting subjects—himself and the contemporary drama.

What makes Mr. Jones's pronouncements so invariably interesting is their quality of authoritative certainty. He never hesitates, is never in doubt. Are you panting to elevate the Drama ? Consult Mr. Jones, and he will tell in a moment the only way in which it can be done. Or are you anxious to know what constitutes the perfect play ? Turn to Mr. Jones, and not only will he furnish you with an accurate and exhaustive definition, but if he happens to be in a mood of expansive geniality (and when is the great man otherwise ?) he will also tell you without a moment's hesitation how that perfect play should be written.

This large-hearted generosity, this air of infallibility, are certain signs of genius ; and to Mr. Jones as an Art-creator we reverentially bow : but as a critic, even as an expounder of his own methods, we fear that the gifted gentleman can scarcely be regarded as an oracle. But that is no disparagement, it is rather a consequence of genius. For can the inspired poet sit down calmly and measure the cubic contents of his afflatus, or reduce his fine frenzy to terms of decimals ? No, Mr. Jones and Shakespeare sing but as the linnet sings upon the spray of gorse—because they must.

What proves so clearly that Mr. Jones is not conscious of his own methods is the fact that he has never yet, notwithstanding his many utterances on the subject, done perfect justice to himself. He has been altogether too modest, too unassuming. He poses as a mere dramatic reformer, while all the time he has been something far greater, far nobler than this, in fact the prophet of Dramatic Evolution. What Darwin did for biology, Spencer for the science of social development, that Mr. Jones has done for the Drama; and a sympathetic study of his latest play, "The Bauble Shop," will prove beyond the shadow of a doubt the truth of this assertion.

There are dramatists who desire to quit for ever the old infertile soil, and break fresh ground, and Mr. Jones with an innocence that is almost touching, fondly imagines that he also is of this band of novelty hunters. How sweet is the simplicity of genius! It is possible that when Mr. Jones is planning a new play the reforming spirit may for the moment take possession of him, but when it comes to the actual performance the divine fire within him overpowers ignoble theories, and the result is a work of art, which is what all perfect works of art should be, a noble development of what has gone before—a glorious welding together into one harmonious whole, of the best contemporary ideas with the best of those that have had their origin in the past.

Mr. Jones, like the true evolutionist that he is, shrinks instinctively from the harsh crudeness of the novel and the unfamiliar; and presumably, without being aware of it, is governed by the great truth that good ideas never grow old and musty, but like port and ruined castles, time merely mellows them. Let us then now consider in what manner these principles have been applied in Mr. Jones's latest art-work—"The Bauble Shop," now being played with enormous success at the Criterion.

We shall find in the play in question many a dear old idea, many a familiar friend decked out in new apparel of the very best Jones-cut, and treated with so admirable and masterly a skill that the result is artistic delight and crowded houses.

First there is our old friend Eccles, from whom we last parted at the end of the third act of "Caste." He has returned from Jersey, that paradise of cheap liquor, and having inherited the toy-shop of his near relative Mr. Caleb Plummer, has judiciously changed his name to that of Matthew Keber. But time has not stood still with him (and here we see the hand of the Master), the low-comedy drunkard of the last generation has developed into the latter-day dodderer with the alcohol habit. But the *genius loci*, that is to say, the spirit of the late Mr. Plummer, has had a wholesome effect upon him. He is no longer a lyrical socialist, but devotes his intervals of sobriety to the invention of penny novelties. And what has become of his daughters? One, alas, has left him for ever; Polly Eccles, deserted by Sam Gerridge who has joined a deputation of tradesmen from the Ball's Pond Road, has been adopted by a lady of

high degree, and now romps through the piece as Gussy Bellenden, a fashionable, fine lady. But, bless you ! she is very much the same old Polly that once we knew ; and her good breeding is but a thin veneer. She is also just as sprightly as ever, and always ready, upon the slightest provocation, to oblige the company with an up-to-date comic song. But Esther, our sweet and gentle Esther, she, at least, is still faithful to that venerable reprobate, her father. Her change of name, for she is now called Jessie Keber, has made her, if anything, more virtuously tearful, more mildly heroic than ever ; and she is still addicted to the pernicious practice of taking tea at unseasonable hours. And at these tea-parties she is ever ready to welcome—whom do you think ? None other than her old sweetheart, Georged'Alroy. But that familiar friend has also been the subject of evolution. He has succeeded to the courtesy title of Viscount Clivebrooke, and being no longer a younger son, has very properly "cut" the army and gone into politics. This change of occupation has sharpened his lordship's wits and enriched his vocabulary. Moreover, he would appear to have made an arrangement, very much to his own advantage, with Captain Hawtree. He has agreed to acknowledge the Captain as his cousin, under the name of the Hon. Charles Teviot, and in exchange for this Hawtree has handed over, for his lordship's exclusive use, his entire stock of witty aphorisms and cynical reflections ; and D'Alroy, once the slow-witted and heavy, now sparkles with epigram like a satiric Catherine wheel. Endowed as he now is with a capacity for saying unpleasant things about everyone in an agreeable and witty manner, he is naturally the most popular person in London ; and it is not, therefore, surprising to find that he has already attained to the proud position of Leader of the House of Commons.

But wealth and popularity have been too much for George, Lord Clivebrooke, and when the play opens he is rapidly developing into a bold bad man ; but he is saved, saved by a good woman (another old friend). It all happens at a tea-party—that dear familiar tea-party, which is not, by-the-way, on this occasion, a very lively meal. George is wrestling with his conscience all tea-time, and that is by no means an exhilarating performance. One almost longs for Polly to dance on with a slice of ham followed by Hawtree with the tea-kettle and consequent funniments, but unfortunately they are not on in the second act, and so they do not appear. But someone else does, and who should that someone else be but another old friend of ours, Mr. Timothy McShane, M.P., whose acquaintance we made a short time since in Mr. Pinero's play, "The Times." But he is no longer an Irish member. He has acquired a drapery establishment, probably that of Mr. Egerton-Bompas lately retired from business, and moreover he has dropped his brogue, changed his name to Stoach, and now represents an English constituency as a radical champion of purity. But he is much the same old McShane that he used to be. He still hates the Conservative party, and especially one particular

member of it, Mr. Egerton-Bompas—I beg pardon, Lord Clivebrooke—and having acquired certain information of a compromising character in regard to the private life of Mr. Bompas—I should say, Lord Clivebrooke—proceeds to use this information in order to wreck Mr. Bompas's—I beg pardon again—Lord Clivebrooke's public career.

And here I may remark parenthetically, with what consummate skill has Mr. Jones improved this incident, as originally treated—the incident which is in fact the main motive of the play. It is true that the idea occurred first to Mr. Pinero, but that is an insignificant detail. And moreover there was an air of truth and reality about his treatment of it in “The Times” that was of course highly inartistic. So Mr. Pinero ought only to be too delighted to play Boccacio to Mr. Jones's Shakespeare. The latter gentleman (Jones, not Shakespeare) clearly realises the great truth that Art and Nature are quite distinct and irreconcilable. We do not want truth and probability on the stage, they would result in mere irritating realism. Had simple fidelity to Nature been the aim of Mr. Jones, how differently, and at the same time how ineffectively, would he have treated the ending of the second act of “The Bauble Shop!” Mr. Timothy Stoach, it will be remembered, discovers George Clivebrooke in the company of Esther Keber under circumstances that are, to say the least of it, suspicious; and threatens forthwith to publish the fact to the world with a view to sully George's social reputation and imperil his political career. How easy for the Conservative leader to have closed the lips of the revengeful Radical by declaring that Esther was his affianced wife. But that would have been so crudely, so painfully probable, and moreover would have brought the play to an abrupt conclusion. Besides in that event we should not have had the fine scene in the last act when the Marquise—but, stop, here is another old friend that I had quite forgotten—let me hasten to introduce her, or to speak more accurately, him.

It will be remembered that in “Caste” the Marquis was left “paralysed at Spa, with three physicians”; but he is now happily restored to health—a little shaky and quivery, nothing more. His recovery was probably due, not to the three physicians, but to the circumstance of his having succeeded to an English title, for he is now the Earl of Sarum. We are very pleased to find that he has been restored to health and to his loving wife, for surely never was there a more perfect marriage than that of the Marquis de St. Maur, otherwise Lord Sarum, and our old friend the Marquise. In character, tastes, habits, even in their manner of speaking, they are absolutely alike. It is true that the Marquis, unlike his wife, is not a student of Froissart, and for that circumstance we owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Jones. But they are both equally ready to overcome their loathing of *mésalliances* which amounts almost to a disease, and equally prepared to join the lovers' hands at the end of the play. Somewhat tedious persons, both of them, but extremely useful when it becomes necessary to bring down the curtain.

I should like to consider this epoch-making work at greater length, but space will not permit me to dwell upon its many other evolutionary beauties. I will only call attention in passing to Lady Kate Ffennell, who is a delightful development of that interesting antiquity Charles, his friend : always at hand as she is to receive the heroes' confidences, and help along the story, she is alike picturesque and invaluable.

And now in conclusion let me tender to Mr. Jones my humble thanks, not only for this fascinating play, but for the many others he has given to the world, all of which are genuine examples of artistic evolution. Long may he continue to gild the lily and add other tint unto the rose. That is his *métier* ; that is the corner of the workshop of art, so to speak, which he has made his own, and in which he labours with such excellent results to the world at large, and we trust to his own pocket. But of the pecuniary value of such a play as "The Bauble Shop" there can be no doubt whatever, so we take off our hats to Mr. Jones, the highly successful playwright. And when we consider what excellent use he makes of any sort of dramatic material he may find available, may we not truthfully apply to him the popular misquotation from Dr. Johnson—" *Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit?* "

ROMANY.



Native Theatricals in Africa.



NUMBER of people would be surprised to learn that the natives of Central and Western Africa are devoted playgoers. On all important occasions, such as a public holiday, the death of a chief or petty chief, the birth or marriage of a chief's son or daughter, although the firing of guns and the drinking of quantities of "tombo" (the fermented sap of the palm tree), form important items of the programme, still the indolent, pleasure-loving natives agree with Hamlet that "the play's the thing." Let us stroll down about four o'clock in the afternoon to one of their villages, composed of a collection of evil smelling and dilapidated mud huts, relieved here and there by a petty chief's domicile; the latter are built in clumsy imitation of the European style of architecture. Some of the chiefs have considerable pretensions to civilization, even preferring to adopt the unbecoming costume of the white man in place of their own graceful and gaily coloured toga or loin-cloth.

It is New Year's Day and on arrival at the outskirts of the village we are made aware of the fact by the firing of cannon, incessant drumming, and other ebullitions of joy. A big dance is about to commence in the grand square, and to that locality we bend our steps. Having pushed our way through the seething masses of excited but good-tempered looking natives who throng the narrow streets which diverge on to the square, we are met by a young and good-looking man, a petty chief, who rejoices in the name of Fine-country. He speedily pilots us to his own European house overlooking the square, on the verandah of which we take our seats to view the approaching exhibition. A novel sight meets our gaze as we scan the vast audience assembled beneath us. The square is crammed to excess with thousands of natives of both sexes packed *en masse*, dressed in their native costumes, the cloth of which is woven in the most vivid and brilliant colours that Manchester can produce and which the Africans love so well. A large open space is kept clear for the dancers in the centre. On one side, occupying chairs, sit several influential chiefs, in the midst of whom I recognise an old friend in Oko Jumbo, the sworn enemy of the late notorious Ja-Ja, who bows majestically in return to my salutation. Around each chair stand the wives and household slaves of the respective chiefs. The mighty potentates themselves are protected from the rays of the scorching sun by enor-

mous umbrellas of the most extravagant and gaudy patterns and lavishly gilded. On the opposite side a band of about forty performers are squatted on the ground with their huge wooden drums, roughly made zithers and other curious instruments before them. The whole mass of dignified looking chiefs and gesticulating natives in bright and varied costumes, formed, under the intensely brilliant sun, a *tout ensemble* which, for picturesqueness and harmony, could hardly be surpassed.

Oko Jumbo claps his hands as a gracious assent that the performance may begin; the band strikes up a stirring tune of some sort for full orchestra, to judge by the noise. Although the music conveys the impression that the same bars are repeated over and over again, there is a decided rhythm in the weird sounds, and the precision and time kept is remarkable. About two dozen dancers spring into the open space, and the dance commences. The figures of the dancers appear abnormally tall owing to the extraordinary carved and painted ju-jus, grotesque looking heads cut out of wood, which are placed on the tops of the heads of the dancers themselves, their own faces being totally concealed by thin coloured drapery. Their bodies are enveloped in gorgeous tight-fitting tunics, lavishly ornamented, and the nether limbs in voluminous skirts reaching to the knee. The performers are all of the stronger sex. Although there appears to be a total absence of stage-management or control, the evolutions of the different dances are gone through without a hitch, the different rows passing each other and coming to the front in their respective turns without the slightest confusion. The actual steps of the dances are much after the style of Nautch dancers, most of the motions being executed with the body. Every now and again a dancer drops out and seating himself on the knee of an on-looker, partakes of a glass of gin, and is refreshed and cooled down after the manner of our English prize-fighters, after which he resumes his place in the dance with renewed energy. As the music becomes louder the dance becomes more furious; cases of gin are being continually piled up behind the dancers, these are presented by the different chiefs in proportion to the amount of pleasure the entertainment affords them. But as chiefs try to undo each other by the munificence of their gifts, the performers gain considerably by their friendly rivalry. The dances last about half-an-hour each, and the retiring dancers are immediately followed by others, without any interval whatsoever. This is a tremendous strain on the band, who have to play continually for two or three hours, in addition to which there are no "piano" movements in their compositions—very much the reverse. It is to be hoped they get well paid for their services.

The programme is wonderfully varied, there being no two dances alike. A very clever stilt dance given by one man, was a marvel of acrobatic skill; notwithstanding his being raised on stilts some ten feet from the ground he danced with as much *verve* and *abandon* as if he stood on *terra firma*. Another very clever ballet

is called the "Bell" dance. The performers, twelve in number, are covered from head to foot with small bells, which jingle with every moment of their bodies. Again and again, whilst dancing furiously, the whole troupe stops dead for a second, and not a bell is heard to tinkle—the furious antics being recommenced a second afterwards. We were told that if an unfortunate dancer did by any chance allow one of his bells to sound at this important moment, he had a very bad quarter of an hour with his chief afterwards. Luckily the African is not a likely subject to be troubled with nervousness or stage-fright. These men are trained so carefully that such an event seldom happens. On inquiring where the people managed to obtain their handsome dresses, we were informed that they all came from London, and in some form or other had figured on the English stage.

Darkness had fallen before we rose from our seats to partake of dinner with the chief, Fine-country, but the dances were still going on, looking most weird and fantastic under the flashing light of innumerable torches. I must confess to having contributed five cases of gin to the theatrical treasury; may I be forgiven for encouraging the demoralizing liquor traffic among the poor natives, but I had one good excuse—it was the only current coin of the country.

After a sumptuous dinner, of which the menu principally consisted of fowls and the flesh of the goat in various forms, crowned by the standard dish of the country, "palm oil chop," we were conducted by our host to another part of the village, for the purpose of witnessing a specimen of the native legitimate drama. The play was being performed in a large longitudinal hut, and had already commenced when we appeared on the scene. The audience were squatted on the ground, the building being crowded to suffocation. It was a full house with a vengeance, but our *cicerone* speedily found room for us, and we were specially honoured by having chairs brought in for our use. Arranged around the actors were a number of natives who sang a continuous chant of a most melancholy character, accompanying themselves by beating time with their hands. I concluded that they were a sort of equivalent to the ancient Greek chorus. Not being conversant with the language, I could not follow the plot of the piece, but it somewhat resembled a transpontine drama with an extra number of villains thrown in. But perhaps in our ignorance, and unjustly judging by the villainous countenances of some of the performers, I may have included the villain, the virtuous hero and the benevolent old father all in the same category. I particularly noticed that ladies were conspicuous by their absence from among the performers. Some of the acting was very good, even verging at times upon the sublime; but many a good effect was spoilt by the actor calmly breaking off in the middle of his lines to enter into an argument with a friend among the audience. Some even refreshed themselves with nips of gin in full sight of the house with the most perfect *sang froid*.

After enduring for about an hour the choice aroma of gin blended with perspiring native, the smoke from the torches, and the infernal din, we decided to make our escape ; choosing our opportunity when the noise and confusion were at their height, we stole out into the street, delighted to once more find ourselves in the cool night air. Our friend Fine-country escorted us to the outskirts of the village, and as he left us before we struck into the bush, said to me in pigeon English and in a most serious tone of voice, "You no tink play for we country fit to pass play for white man's country—pass him plenty, eh ?" I left him labouring under this happy delusion, being too tired and sleepy to stay and argue the point with him.

FRANK H. MORLAND.



In the Theatre.



ONE is your face, with its powder and patches,
 Lost in a cloudlet of silver-lined gloom.
 Back thro' the long years my memory catches
 The scent of sweet violet and cowslip in bloom.
 Just for a moment the vision comes o'er me,
 Just for a second I see you again,
 Faded the footlights and faces before me,
 I wait at the corner of Daffodil Lane.

'Tis gone—the dream's past, and the vision is over—
 I wake 'neath a tempest of laughter and cheers,
 As daintily Peggy coquets with her lover,
 And loves him, and leaves him in anger and tears.
 But I—I've grown critical here in the stalls,—
 Gaze on your acting with something like pain ;
 In spite of your glamour there's something that palls—
 You played the part better in Daffodil Lane.

Laugh on, and forget. All the world is your lover !
 So petted and fêted, adored by the town,
 I bid you adieu—for the play is all over.
 Good-night, Mistress Peggy, the curtain is down !
 Good-night, Mistress Peggy ! believe me, if ever
 A thought of me crosses your pathway again,
 In good sooth, and indeed I have managed to sever
 My heart from that dream down in Daffodil Lane.

E. COOKE.

“To the Uttermost Farthing.”

“If I have sinned, I have suffered. Have I not
Done exiation, even all these years.”
From “The Disciples.”



R. DALTON, sole lessee and manager of the Imperial Theatre, was leisurely imbibing the morning's news with his coffee, when his eye lighted upon a paragraph which struck his inmost soul with consternation, at the same time forcing upon his notice the ridiculous limitations of the English language. Words were too poor a vehicle for his thoughts at that moment. There is, of course, an objection based upon moral grounds to the use of bad language at all. To a prodigal indulgence in it there is an objection which must commend itself to the reasoning faculty of the most inveterate offender. He is provided with a store of language which, by paying due regard to economy, should see him safely through the most exasperating emergencies in life, but if he elect to squander it recklessly upon such trivialities as missing shirt-buttons, slow trains, or—in the case of a theatrical manager—the density of a super's intellect, there comes a day of reckoning when, brought face to face with a situation really worthy of his choicest expletives, he finds himself a bankrupt in words which shall at all do justice to his feelings. Mr. Dalton testified reluctantly to the soundness of this argument as he sat staring blankly into his coffee-cup in a silence more eloquent than words. The strongest language in his by no means limited vocabulary would but feebly meet the present case—and he was miserably conscious of the fact. After some seconds' abstracted contemplation of the cup he turned again to the newspaper which had dropped from his hand, and re-read the “par.” by which he had been reduced, for perhaps the first time in his experience, to utter speechlessness:

“It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Miss Dallas Wynne, the clever young actress. Late last night the body of a woman was discovered floating in that portion of the Regent's Canal which runs at the back of Cornwall Terrace. Life proved to be quite extinct, and the body was subsequently identified as that of Miss Wynne. It is believed that the unfortunate lady must have missed her footing whilst walking on the towing-path, and so slipped into the canal. A melancholy interest attaches to the lamentable occurrence from the fact that the principal rôle in Mr. Harold Vincent's new play, which is now for production at the Imperial Theatre to-night, was to have been created by Miss Wynne on the occasion of her reappearance on the London stage after an absence of more than four years, two of which, it will be remembered, have been spent in Australia, whence she had only recently returned with an exceptionally brilliant reputation for so young an actress.”

And for once the colonial enthusiasm had been sensibly directed, reflected Mr. Dalton, balancing his teaspoon on the edge of his cup!

In his leisure moments, the manager occasionally gave himself up to speculation as to whether there could be anything in the climatic conditions of that continent especially favourable to the metamorphosis of the tenth-rate artist (!) from England into the genius of the first brilliance beyond the seas. Removed from those conditions, the genius sank again into the tenth-rate artist. This might be due to the prejudicial effect of the sea air in crossing; but it struck him as regrettable that they could not be prevailed upon to remain where their talents were so justly appreciated, that they would insist upon returning to immolate themselves for the benefit of their unthankful country. But Dallas Wynne—as pretty and dainty a little actress as ever stepped—did not come into that category. There was—as her manager tersely put it—money in her, and he had taken no small credit to himself for his promptitude in securing the prize. And now fate, the jade, had served him this scurvy turn!

He thought of the understudy to whose share Miss Wynne's part would fall, and he muttered "Fat head!" which was ungallant. It was also unfair, for the understudy was a hardworking little girl and not destitute of intelligence, only her comedy bore the same relation to Dallas Wynne's that a stolid suet pudding bears to the flakiest puff paste. "Sh'll ruin the show!" and Mr. Dalton groaned aloud as he thought of the play on which he had staked all his hopes and a considerable sum of money. He had been so certain of scoring the success of the season. To be sure, it was unfortunate—from a business point of view—that so long an interval as two years had elapsed since Miss Wynne's divorce. To act as a "draw" that sort of thing required to be of recent date, but still her re-appearance was invested with a certain piquancy from the fact that she had not been seen in London since the day she left England with Herbert Blair, who, whatever his faults, possessed the saving merit, in Mr. Dalton's eyes, of having taught the girl to act. He did not believe it was in the heart of the most obstinately wrong-headed audience to remain impervious to the delicious witchery of her comedy-acting. There was for her a big future, of that he felt assured—and for him, in the capacity of her exploiter, a big fortune. And now she was dead—and the bubble burst! Dalton was not stony-hearted, as human nature goes, and when the poignancy of his own disappointment was past, he would feel a very genuine regret for the fragile, winsome little woman, with her pretty childish waywardness and the large grey eyes which so often belied the lightness of her laugh. But just at present his mental attitude towards her was that of injured resentment. A life in which he was interested should have been more carefully guarded. The accident must have been brought about by some piece of culpable carelessness and argued a most criminal indifference to his interests. Indeed, what business had she at all on the towing-path

of the canal, he questioned in an access of irritation. It was not a popular resort in a general way, save for bargees and dirty little boys!

Mrs. Robert Morton, of Cornwall Terrace, Regent's Park was perhaps the only person who had a shrewd suspicion as to the nature of the "accident," and could, had she been so disposed, have thrown some light upon it, but after a momentary twinge of conscience—which she attributed to a disordered digestion—over the newspaper "par." which had so disturbed Mr. Dalton's equanimity, she dismissed the subject from her thoughts, salving her conscience with the reflection that after all "it was quite for the best."

On leaving the theatre after rehearsal on the previous day, Miss Wynne had directed a cabman to drive her to Cornwall Terrace.

"Yes, mum, which house?"

"No house. Put me down at the corner."

There was a look of resolution which set strangely upon the delicate, almost babyish features, as she learnt forward in the cab gazing straight before her with unseeing eyes. Over and over in her mind she rehearsed the approaching interview. Over and over again she repeated to herself the arguments she would use. And yet there should be less argument than pleading. Her letters had availed her nothing, it was true, but letters were such half-hearted advocates. If need be, she would humble herself to the dust, but she would carry the day. It was her last card, and everything—life itself—hung upon the issue of the game. Oh, for eloquence to plead her cause! The pretty, laughing lips were firmly set, and the excitement under which she laboured brought a vivid spot of colour to either cheek and an unnatural brilliance to the grey eyes. The little hands clutched the door before her with a grip of such unconscious violence that a mark was left upon the delicate flesh. Scarcely waiting for the cab to draw up, she sprang out, and dismissing the man, hastened past the row of houses standing as monuments of solid architecture and irreproachable respectability.

She paused at the far end of the terrace, and pushing back the massive iron gate, stepped up to the front door. The bell pealed grimly resonant through the stillness of the gloomy old house, and as answering foot-steps sounded in the paved hall, the slight figure on the door-step touched her veil nervously. Would she be recognised by the servant who admitted her? A sigh of relief escaped her as she met the blank gaze of a total stranger.

"Is Mrs. Morton at home?" The sweet voice was low and rather tremulous.

"Yes, mum!"

As the servant led the way to a room at the back of the dimly-lighted hall, she paused a moment, holding her breath, a strangely eager look in her eyes. But no sound broke the oppressive stillness which reigned around, and the curious intentness faded from her face.

"What name shall I say, mum?"

Dallas hesitated a moment, but not sufficiently long to arouse curiosity in the well-regulated mind of the servant.

"If you would tell her that a lady would like to speak to her."

A rapid patter of little feet across the room had preceded her entrance, but it had passed unnoticed by the girl, striving her utmost to still the rapid, irregular heart-throbs which threatened each moment to choke her, neither, as she stepped lightly forward into the sombre room with its oppressively ponderous furniture was she in the least conscious of the scrutiny of a pair of bright eyes—shy and startled with the look of a squirrel suddenly disturbed in its sport—intently fixed upon her through a hole in the curtain which screened off the window recess.

The downstairs regions were forbidden ground to Laddie, but it was so dull shut up in the nursery all alone—nurse liked being in the kitchen better than the nursery—and he was quite sure mother was out; he heard the front door bang, and so, the coast being clear, he and Punchie had crept down on tip-toe into the library. Laddie liked the library better than any other room, because he could sit in the window and watch the heavily-laden barges going past on the canal at the bottom of the garden. He would like to know where they came from, and where they were going, but when he asked nurse, she always told him not to bother her. Some day there would come by a beautiful barge, not coaly and dirty like these, but with beautiful silk sails like the picture in his story-book, and there would be a beautiful lady on board who would turn out to be his other mother, for he had another besides the one who lived here, he had heard cook say so to nurse, only he did not think cook wanted him to hear because when he asked where she was, cook looked cross and rather frightened and said she was dead long ago. The beautiful lady would stop the barge and stretch out her hand and take Punchie and him on board, and they would sail away to beautiful places where people were never cross and said, "Don't bother." But Laddie never talked about his fancy. Once he had said something before father and mother about the "other mother," and they had both been so dreadfully angry that he had never again ventured to speak of her, but he liked to sit in the window with Punchie under one arm and watch for her.

The fugitive had not made good his retreat without leaving traces of his presence in the shape of Punchie and a glove which he was vainly striving to fix on Punchie's head at the moment of surprise. Laddie only became aware of this terrible fact when he saw the strange lady suddenly drop on her knees beside Punchie with such a funny little cry. The culprit concealed behind the curtain shivered with apprehension. Mother would come in directly, and if she saw Punchie she would know that he had been downstairs, and judgment swift and unerring would descend upon him for leaving the nursery, but worse than that, mother had threatened to burn Punchie. She said he was nothing but an old rag, and she would not have him

lying about the place, and life without Punchie would be but a howling wilderness—something too horrible for contemplation. Why, in all his four short years who had there been but Punchie to whom he could sob out his little over-burdened heart when people were crosser than usual!

The pretty lady seemed to like Punchie. She was holding him so tenderly, and though she gave a funny little cooing laugh when she first spied him out, and Laddie was inclined to think it was at the expense of Punchie's nose which had been a lost quantity this many a day, it was not at all the sort of laugh that mother gave when she looked at him. That always made Laddie feel sore and angry. Indeed, the lady must have taken a great fancy to Punchie, for she bent down and kissed him so lovingly—poor, battered old Punchie! Though his owner's heart went out to her for this kindly appreciation of his favourite's merits, he became a trifle anxious lest her partiality should go the length of appropriating him, and it was a distinct relief when her attention was distracted to the glove on the floor. It was a little thread glove, very full of holes at the tips, and as she pressed it to her lips Laddie was almost certain he saw a great tear fall on it. What a funny lady she was! The baby figure shrank yet farther behind the curtain, for his ear caught the rustle of silk along the hall. The stranger's face was in the shadow and the failing light revealed only the outline of the girlish form to Mrs. Morton as she entered the room. She advanced a few steps with a certain courteous enquiry written upon her face which plainly demanded an explanation of her visitor's presence, but as the first tremulous accents of apology fell upon her ear, she drew sharply back, her expression changing to one of chill resentment. Interpreting the sudden movement as a refusal to receive her, the girl stretched out her hands in an urgent appeal.

"Ah, you won't refuse to hear me? I will not detain you long."

Mrs. Morton rested her hand lightly upon the table, lifting her eyebrows with insolent significance as she glanced across at the face raised to hers in such humble supplication.

"I should have imagined that it would have been clear even to you that in calling here your conduct is a little unusual. May I enquire the motive of your visit?"

For days Dallas had been turning over in her mind an elaborate little speech in which her request should be clearly embodied. Oh, she would be so sensible, so self-controlled, that she could not be refused a hearing—her request could not be dismissed with contempt. She would show that she was not unfitted for the privilege she craved—she would prove herself worthy of the trust! But the sight of that battered childish treasure on the floor had unnerved her—the contact of the little ragged glove within her closed fingers, the sight of that proud, cold woman facing her in her statuesque beauty brought home to her as nothing else had done the consequences of her mad deed. In a flash

of light she saw the lonely, loveless little life—all her well-turned phrases were swept away in a passion of aching mother-hunger, and for sole answer she threw out her hands, faltering helplessly—

"My child! Give me my child."

A smile of amusement curved Mrs. Morton's thin lips, but it passed unnoticed by the girl, her whole soul intent upon the struggle which lay before her.

"You have been married more than a year, have you not?—but I only heard of it quite recently. Then I made up my mind to leave Australia and come to England alone. I said to myself, the child will not be wanted, he will be in their way, and when I reached London I wrote to Rob, begging to be allowed the charge of him. During the last few weeks I have written letter after letter to him and everyone of them has been returned without a single word in reply. Then I thought of you. Your influence with him was always so strong, even in the old days. Now that you were his wife he would listen to you when he would not hear a word from me. And I resolved to come and see you, to implore you to use your influence on my behalf."

Mrs. Morton gave an icy little laugh. Really this woman's ideas concerning her position were almost refreshingly artless. "I think you can scarcely expect to find Mr. Morton desirous of opening a correspondence with you, and for the rest, surely you must be aware that you have forfeited all claim—all rights—"

But the girl turned upon her almost fiercely.

"Who spoke of claims—of rights? It was of pity—of mercy—that I spoke; I spoke of a woman hungering for a sight of her child starving for lack of its love. She flung it aside as a worthless gift, you would say. True, but has she not paid for her wickedness? My God, to stretch out hungry arms, yearning for the touch of little fingers—the sound of a baby voice—and to find nothing but empty silence!"

The last words died away in a wail of pain. Mrs. Morton eyed the speaker with cold dislike. How unpleasantly theatrical she was! It was such bad form, and really it would be very awkward if any of the servants chanced to be in the hall. But Dallas—no more the pretty, thoughtless child irresponsible as a feather obeying the breath of impulse—but a woman, haggard and wild-eyed, fighting as for dear life for the boon she craved beyond all else in the world, bent upon breaking down that icy indifference against which her passion spent itself with as little effect as the fretting of the waves against a rock of granite, did not stop to pick her words, pouring them out in a flood of passionate eloquence.

"It is not as if he were dead. To fold the restless little hands and lay him away in his tiny coffin might be hard, but not so hard as to think of him alive, not to know whether he is in need of me, whether he is in trouble or pain. And to know it is my own mad act that has cut me off from him! I tell you, it is paid for with tears

of blood, wrung drop by drop from the heart's core." She caught herself up sharply with an apology for the disparaging reflection her words conveyed.

"Oh, forgive me, I know you would care for Rob's child. That you would do your duty by him I do not for a moment doubt, believe me. I know, too, that I am not clever or sensible like you—not so fit perhaps to bring up a child. But my baby was such a loving little soul. Rob was his father, but there was nothing of Rob in his nature. He was all—all mine—and he will need love and sympathy. You are so strong—you cannot guess what it is to hunger for sunshine, for tenderness, and to be turned empty away." She put up her hand with a sudden movement as if to ease the terrible compression at her throat. "God help me! I can't think of him here—unloved—perhaps suffering for my sin."

How vividly that cold sunless room brought before her the chilling misery of her brief married life. It was such a poor little story, sordid and commonplace to a degree. Only the old story of a transient enchantment of one whose every thought, word, and deed had hitherto been regulated wholly according to the dictates of reason, falling of a sudden under the unconscious spell of a winsome face and pretty, childish wiles—of a desperate duel between head, ably seconded by the advice of his friends, and heart, backed by the special pleading of a pair of haunting grey eyes, dancing with mischievous glee. She was but a child in years and with less than the average child's discretion, urged reason. True, but he was nearly twice her age and would supply the training that she lacked. She was frivolous and had no conception of the responsibilities of life! It was undeniable but for all that the shallow society with which she mixed was chiefly responsible. Removed from its influence and brought into contact with that of himself and his friends, doubtless she would in time do credit to her enviable position as wife to a rising city merchant. The stage was a questionable training school for a domestic life! Yes, but settled in a good home every woman took to house-keeping as a duck to the water. And sweet pouting lips arose before his mind's eye, clinching the argument conclusively if not altogether logically. So heart won the day. But her triumph was short-lived. With the wane of the honeymoon, outraged Reason had gained a hearing, and before six months had flown, his defeat was avenged and his advocates exulted in the discomfiture of his opponent. Herself the child of a popular actress, life to the irresponsible little creature whom Robert Morton had made his wife had been hitherto little more than a fascinating game, in which even her marriage only figured as an amusing incident. When her husband showed a disposition to turn tutor, she became tricky as a sprite. Then, as he gave signs of displeasure at the levity of her conduct, she became penitent but perplexed as to his wishes. When she heard his plans for her welfare, which primarily demanded the repudiation of all her own friends, and a strict adherence to all his, she grew distressed

and tearful, and brought down Robert's resentment upon herself. She did not like his friends—they eyed her with disapproval as the embodiment of Bad Form—and she began to fret and pine for the old free life. Then her mother died, and even as she clung to him for sympathy, Dallas felt that by Robert it was regarded as a fortunate severance of the last link which bound her to the old associations, and the wrong struck root and rankled in the poor little butterfly brain. Then there were the domestic trials, amid which Dallas floundered helplessly, hopelessly embarrassed by the dense pall of ignorance, which obstructed her at every turn. Old Mrs. Morton's life had represented an elaborate system of house-keeping, and her son regarded his wife's ignorance upon the simplest domestic detail as wilful stupidity. So he overwhelmed her with directions, with which he had been previously primed by his friends, and, notably Miss Burfield, who having herself aspired to Dallas' position, naturally took an interest in the working of Robert's experiment. She was a clever woman and he was but a man, and so it had needed little *finesse* to win for herself the post of *confidante*. Solicitous enquiries as to the little wife's domestic progress, followed as he detailed his domestic difficulties, by carefully worded sympathy prudently distilled at first with exhortations to patience. The woman did not live who would not in time learn to do justice to such an exemplary husband, she told him! But the little caged bird only grew bewildered and scared at the feats which were demanded of it; and it sat on its perch and drooped, or fluttered its wings wearily against the bars. And all the time, if it had but known, it was playing into the hands of the enemy, for now Miss Burfield's cue was "heartfelt condolence" for the husband, and "womanly indignation" with the obstinate offender who was wrecking his happiness. A policy of coercion was recommended, and Robert steeled his heart against the helpless little creature whose happiness he had taken into his keeping. And so Reason and Dora Burfield triumphed all down the line. After all Robert was but human, and it was easy work persuading him that he was a domestic hero and martyr, and whilst he was busy believing it, the incompetent little wife sat at home and shed tears and ink in profusion over the bills which would assume such terrible proportions. And Robert's resentment increased at the same rate as his love declined. And then the crash came! Dallas had been detected in a falsehood, prompted thereto in a spirit of terrified self-defence. A shower of bitter words, of reproaches harsher than usual terminated in a threat to remove her child from her control. She was not fit to bring up children, and he bitterly rued the day he married her, Robert told her, heaping the fuel on his wrath to stifle that still voice in his heart which pleaded for the shrinking little figure with its anguished grey eyes.

And in that hour the temptation came, for, as she crouched in a corner of the gloomy room, sobbing hopelessly in her loneliness over

the cruel words with which Robert had left her, a visitor was announced. Herbert Blair had come to bid her good-bye—he was off on tour to Australia the next day, he told her, looking at the small, miserable face with a dangerous sympathy. There was an old tenderness on his part dating from the days when they acted together before Dallas' marriage, and almost before she was aware of it he had drawn the whole story from the desolate little heart.

"Leave it all! Come back to the old life and be happy!" whispered the tempter. And the tear-swollen eyes from which all the laughter had been washed, strayed round the room, seeming in its depressing dreariness an emblem of her life—and she thought of the cheery glare of the footlights. She remembered the petty hide-bound restrictions of her existence—the wearisome dinner-parties, with the eternal babble strictly confined to provisions and politics—more particularly provisions—and memory painted in glowing colours the old Bohemian freedom. The insuperable difficulties attaching to housekeeping towered before her—herself merely a buffer for husband and servants—and there sounded in her ears the ringing applause of a crowded house, and the blood went pulsing through her veins. Each biting word, each stinging reproach uttered by her husband stood out the harsher contrasted with the protecting tenderness of the man at her side. She did not love him, no, but he seemed to offer her love, tenderness—all of which she stood in need. And she listened! In less than a year Dora Burfield had become Mrs. Morton.

Again Dallas caught herself up, anxious to conciliate her impassive listener.

"You must not think that I am blaming Rob for what is past. I was such a silly kind of wife and I must have been a terrible trial to him. It was not his fault that he could not understand how hard it all was to me. But I think he would have been more patient if he could have guessed. I know it sounds weak and silly, but do you know I have sat and cried over the furniture because it depressed me so. Rob called it gross ingratitude for a good home. That was just it, I think—it was so much too good. I could have done with a little less goodness and a little more beauty. And then there was the housekeeping—more particularly the dripping and stock," she added, even in that supreme moment recognising the ludicrous side of the situation. "Rob was always coming back from his friends with marvellous tales of what could be done with dripping and stock. It really seemed, according to him, that given those two ingredients quite an elaborate dinner could be constructed without the addition of anything else, but when I mentioned it to the cooks they became abusive and gave notice. I always think," with an unsteady little laugh, "that dripping and stock really struck the death-blow at my married happiness."

Mrs. Morton rested her elbow upon the marble mantle-shelf and looked down at Dallas from between her half-closed lids. How

painfully frivolous the girl was! "You do not appear to have been troubled with inconvenient qualms concerning your child when you deserted your home. Has it taken you two years to remember his existence?" she enquired, with smooth sarcasm.

Again the girl was stung into a sharply-uttered retort. "Two years! Not two hours! Heaven knows I would have turned back then, but it was too late—too late!" she repeated, with a sob in her throat. "Such a short time for a deed to be past recall! And looking back, all the trouble seems so petty, so insignificant, for now I think that with my baby in my arms I could face the tortures of Hell itself, and they would scarcely be tortures to me. But how should you understand? You are not a mother!" she added, with an impatience which was half despair at the utter lack of sympathy in the hard, impenetrable face before her.

It was not a happy remark. Laddie, with his eye firmly glued to the peep-hole, and with his small mind very much exercised concerning the animated discussion in progress, wondered why mother at that moment looked so like the little girl next door when he teased her about not having a wooden horse like his. The thin lips tightened ominously.

"You spoke just now of the child inheriting your nature—your instincts. Surely, if this be unfortunately the case, the greater argument for a careful training—the more need for a firm hand to uproot the weeds ere it be too late."

"But Rob might safely trust him with me. I would be so careful of him. Believe me I would prove myself worthy of the trust. I feel I could become something better—stronger—with the child's aid."

The grey eyes were fixed upon the woman in whose hands her fate rested with the agonised appeal of a prisoner awaiting sentence. No judge could have been more coldly impassive than Mrs. Morton.

"I am afraid I really cannot undertake to offer my support in this matter. I could not use my influence with Mr. Morton against my own better judgment, and it does not seem to me that you are at all a fit person to be entrusted with the training of an immortal soul."

Then she had failed! And until this moment of crushing failure Dallas had not realised how absolutely she had counted upon success. For a moment the ground seemed swept from under her feet. Everything was blotted out—she was wandering in chaos, and ever before her eyes flitted that cold, mocking face hiding from view that other baby one with its sunny curls that she yearned to clasp in her arms. With an effort she recovered herself, gasping a little. There was no appeal from the sentence; her first hurried glance established that beyond dispute. But she started forward as Mrs. Morton's hand rested upon the bell at her elbow. True, they had denied her bread, but they could not grudge her the crumbs.

"At least, you will persuade Rob to let me see him sometimes—"

only an occasional glimpse. Oh, he cannot refuse me that. Think of it. I am only begging to share the same privilege as the servants—as the veriest stranger.” The little hands outstretched to arrest the summons for the servant trembled pitifully, but not a ray of answering pity shone in the cold steel-blue eyes fixed upon her. Mrs. Morton merely drew back a step, sweeping her gown to one side.

“And surely you must be aware that in the world’s opinion the very servants, nay, the poorest beggar is a more fit associate for the child than the mother who has so degraded her womanhood. I must really decline to move in the matter at all. My views on the subject are very strong,” and again her hand moved towards the bell.

The girl caught her breath sharply, quivering under the cruel thrust. Not even the crumbs then—but at least a drop of water to quench her burning thirst!

Again she arrested the slim white hand.

“But you will let me see him now—just for a moment—just to hold him in my arms. He shall not know who I am—there shall be nothing to complain of. In the name of pity don’t refuse me that!”

Mrs. Morton rang the bell sharply, and turned upon her visitor with some annoyance.

“It is utterly impossible for me to sanction such a thing without Mr. Morton’s knowledge and permission, which I am convinced would be withheld.”

The girl looked at her dumbly, a mute hopeless misery in her eyes. Did God make women like this? As the servant’s step sounded in the hall, she turned again to the immovable figure at the fireplace.

“May God forgive you!” she said simply, and quietly quitted the room.

Mrs. Morton smoothed down her gown complacently. At last old scores were settled. At last the girl’s presumption in having won Robert’s love in the past was properly punished.

Her retirement was the signal for the rescue of Punchie’s battered person. With his favourite tucked firmly under one arm, Laddie retreated to the window seat, and there, his curly head pressed against the pane, gravely revolved the mystery of the pretty lady. Had she been very naughty, he wondered. He did not know before that grown-up people were naughty, and had to be punished. What could she have done that they would not give her her little boy? It was sad for the little boy, too, because he would be sure to like a nice lady like that. And she had such a pretty voice, too—it made Laddie think of a dream he had of someone who used to bend over him and bury his face in her hair, and when he struggled to brush away the curls she laughed—such a funny, cooing little laugh, like the strange lady’s when she saw Punchie’s broken nose. Poor, pretty lady, her voice sounded as if she wanted to cry badly. The

tiny baby-heart was filled with pity for the trouble he could not understand. He wished he could make her glad again. Why, why there she was again on the towing-path at the bottom of the garden. She was standing quite still looking up at the house so anxiously. What could she be looking for? Ah, now her eyes were resting on the library window, and she was looking straight at him. She put up her hand to her eyes, though there was no sun to dazzle her, and then she threw him a kiss, but she still looked so sad. The poor lady! The serious grey eyes rested upon Punchie, and a generous impulse sprang up in the little heart. Would it make the poor lady feel better to have Punchie? She had seemed to take a fancy to him, and Laddie's experience had taught him that in trouble Punchie was an invaluable comforter. It would be very hard to part with him certainly—indeed, going to bed without Punchie under the pillow seemed out of the question, but if it would make the lady quite happy, perhaps he could manage it. Struggling off the seat, he made his way unnoticed into the hall, and thence by a glass door into the garden. There was a fine rain falling, and the tiny figure, big with the importance of his mission, paused a moment to wrap his pinafore carefully round his battered treasure. With short uncertain steps he trotted hurriedly down the gravel path and toiled up the steep steps which led to a summer house overlooking the canal. So far, so good. He had achieved his escape without attracting attention, but where was the lady? She must have gone away, and now he could not give her Punchie. The little lip quivered with disappointment, as he strained his eyes along the towing-path. Oh no, there she was, much farther down the path, standing quite still and looking at the water. What could she be looking at, Laddie wondered? Perhaps she was waiting for a barge to bring her little boy, just as he himself was watching day by day for the one in which his mother should arrive.

Carefully unfolding the corner of his pinafore in which Punchie was wrapped he pressed a farewell kiss upon the noseless countenance. He did hope the lady would not mind Punchie's shabby appearance—and one large tear fell with a splash on to the place where the nose should have been. But it was carefully dried as he held him at arms'-length over the fence, averting his eyes lest at the last moment his resolution should fail him.

"Poor lady!" The childish treble rang out clear and shrill, but it did not reach the slight drooping figure hesitating on the brink of the dark, silent water. What was the pretty lady doing? Laddie stood quite motionless, with eyes wide with curiosity, whilst Punchie dangled unheeded over the fence. She had gone into the water—into the cold, black water. Had she gone down to look for mermaids, he wondered? but mermaids would not live in nasty water like that. And the rain pattered down on his head, trickling from his curls, and even Punchie grew dank and draggle-tailed without arousing his owner's anxiety, so engrossed was he with

watching for the lady's return from the dreary water which had closed over her head.

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"Quite characteristic!" murmured Mrs. Robert Morton over the newspaper. "So theatrical!—a mind so terribly ill-regulated." On recalling the details of that interview with the dead girl, she derived indescribable satisfaction from the reflection that in giving utterance to those unpalatable truths, she had but acted as the mouthpiece of Church and State. Her little world discussed the event in undertones and decided that it was a most fortunate thing for that nice, sensible woman, Mrs. Morton. The understudy paid the passing tribute of a tear, and congratulated herself upon being so nearly Miss Wynne's figure that the costumes could easily be adapted for her wear.

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And Mr. Dalton moaned gently in his coffee-cup. If the little woman could but have managed the ducking, but contrived to steer clear of the catastrophe, it would have been a little *tour-de-force* in its way. The kind forbearance of the audience would have been solicited, in consideration of the severe shock she had so recently sustained. Criticism would have been disarmed—all deficiencies overlooked—and an enthusiastic reception would have been accorded her. His feelings as a manager were so stirred that it was almost beyond his power to restrain a tear of artistic regret over the golden opportunity so recklessly thrown away.

FORRES BELL.



"Symbolism" on the Stage.



ART," said Mr. Whistler on a certain memorable occasion, "is upon the town." So at present in some quarters is Symbolism, for illustration whereof one may turn to the work of some of the most "modern" writers and painters abroad. A recent conspicuous attempt to have us believe in the introduction of the "symbolic" into modern drama naturally suggests the question of the fitness—even the possibility—of symbolism, as it is to-day understood, on the stage.

It is ill arguing from the particular to the general, but it will be necessary for purposes of illustration, and as a basis for consideration, to regard as a typical instance the play which has at any rate been credited with being an experiment in symbolism.

Preparatory to the introduction of Ibsen's latest work, "The Master Builder," to English readers and audiences, many and various were the rumours "passed round" respecting its nature and aim. The tenour of these was that the play was neither fanciful nor realistic, but symbolic. Then came two further statements, each claiming authenticity. The one declared that the theme of the drama symbolised the conflict between the older generation and the younger, and the impossibility of their harmonising without a change of conditions. The other explanation pretended that by the hero of the play was to be understood Ibsen himself—the successive renunciation on the master-builder's part of two species of building designs in favour of a third, more ambitious than its predecessors, signifying Ibsen's abandonment of poetical plays and realistic home dramas in favour of "symbolic" plays. Anyhow—and this was bitter in the mouths of the lovers of a purblind realism—the work was to be considered as essentially "symbolic," and in this light (and not with regard to their bearing upon the development of the plot) were primarily to be regarded the action and speeches of the personages therein presented. It will not, I think, be here necessary to recapitulate the outline of the story, which has by this time been made more or less familiar to those who interest themselves in the drama.

That the play is in our hands only in a translation which cannot be considered perfect, does not appreciably affect our chance of comprehending its drift. Moreover, we have had the opportunity of seeing it put upon the stage with scrupulous care, great enthusiasm, and, in some respects, marked intelligence.

It is a tribute to Ibsen's dramatic power that his dramas are invariably twice as effective on the stage as they are in print. It is but the barest justice to say that any unprejudiced member of the audience at the recent performances of "The Master Builder" must have felt the unusual and unexpected effect produced by Ibsen's keen insight into character, and the strange hold taken on the mental faculties by his terse, carefully pruned dialogue, charged to straining point with thought. It is this power that makes Ibsen remarkable as a dramatist; had his methods only more proportion, and, above all, had Fate endowed him with a sense of humour, he might be great.

It would, however, be safe to stake a considerable amount on the opinion that the aforesaid unprejudiced spectator—always supposing his ignorance of the preliminary explanations with which the faithful were armed—would be hard put to it to say where the "symbolism" came in, or what it signified. He might reply that from the insistence upon it in the dialogue (not to mention so obvious a device as the knock heard at the door immediately upon the hero's expression of his fear of the "younger generation" which was to usurp the place of the older and was "even then knocking at the door") he supposed that there was intended some representation of the struggle between the old idea and the new, but that it did not seem to be too logically carried out. He would see that the old order of things, as symbolised by Solness and his wife, duly came to its destruction, but he would also observe that the younger generation, in the person of Hilda, gained nothing but rather lost everything by the catastrophe.

Or, following a slightly different train of thought, he might be prepared to see in the motive of the play a version of the maxim respecting new wine in old bottles, to wit, the impossibility of the "old" and "new" generations working together on the old lines. But when presented merely with catastrophe as the end, and no hint of a possible re-adjustment of conditions by which catastrophe might be averted, he would feel that, after all, Ibsen had told him nothing new, and that to symbolise a truism is something very like flogging a dead horse.

What there might be of symbolism would therefore occupy, in his judgment, a secondary place. The types of character presented, though here and there they might appear to him exaggerated, would appeal to him by their verisimilitude, and not as symbols of anything outside themselves. The play would remain a keen and relentless study of complex character—its dramatic interest small, but its psychological interest considerable. In sum, he might term it a play which attracts strongly by virtue of its unconventionality and of the author's exceptional power of observation—a play, to boot, whose effect is immediate *on representation* but tends to evanesce on subsequent consideration.

He would notice incidentally that, as before, Ibsen has given way to the rather unworthy device of labelling a prominent character

with a catch-word—Hilda's "frightfully thrilling" becoming as tiresome as Tesman's "fancy that!" in "Hedda Gabler"; that in many instances the author's inability to recognise the ludicrous leads to the conversion of serious points into food for mirth; and that where the closest analysis is intended, the necessity of definiteness is constantly evaded by the use of the qualifying expression "in a certain sense." "Do you think, then," says one Ibsenite character to another, "that so-and-so is so-and-so?" "Yes," thoughtfully replies the other, "in a certain sense it is." Then the audience feels vaguely that something very wise has been said, and is, no doubt, gratified at the implied tribute to its perspicacity. The Philistine must stifle his impulse to rise in his seat and demand—"Yes, my dear sir or madam, but if you must be so psychological, kindly tell us precisely in *what* sense, that we may know how we are to take you."

In such an estimate of this particular play our unprejudiced spectator would not, I venture to think, be very far wrong. Were it not suggested to him, he would see in the fortunes of Hilda and Solness nothing particularly symbolical; he would regard them as types of the unconventional and the conventional, but he would carry the parallel no farther. He would see, indeed, that any more minute application of the idea would always bring him back to the consideration of the individual characters themselves and in themselves—in relation to the story in which they have a part, not in relation to anything external. In proportion to the closeness of observation on a dramatist's part the actuality of his *dramatis personæ* must increase and the chance of any recognition of symbolism diminish, which seems to point to the fact that the symbolic can have but little place in modern drama.

Two necessary conditions of the employment of symbolism in any presentative art would seem to be that the meaning of the symbol must be apparent of itself, and that the symbol should be unmistakeable as such. Except in a strictly limited degree, the first of these conditions would be very difficult of attainment on the stage. A general idea might be suggested, and understood *per se*. Anything special must of necessity fail in its effect without a "programme" of explanation, such as some musical composers have appended to their works. It would puzzle the musical amateur, without the aid of the explanatory "programme" supplied by Berlioz, to identify the precise emotions which that composer has endeavoured to represent in passages of his "Symphonie Fantastique." Similarly, in the case of the play under discussion, the failure of the symbolism to explain itself is made evident by the widely different natures of the various solutions that have been suggested. If something is to be symbolised by the general drift of a drama, good and well, so long as the application be obvious; but, as I have said, the more lifelike the personages depicted, the more the spectator will be forced to consider their speeches and actions as illustrations of

character, and in no way as exemplifying any abstract or concrete external.

This brings us to our second condition, that the symbol should be unmistakeable as such. This would seem impossible in any but the most elementary and artificial drama, such as the Mystery or Miracle Play. In any drama dealing with "real live people," as the children would say, the personal interest of the characters must outweigh all other consideration, at any rate when seen upon the stage. In the study it might possibly be different. In literature and in painting—though more easily in the former than in the latter—it may be possible for the reader or spectator by an effort to project his mind into the attitude of that of the author or artist, and so recognise a symbolic intention. With the drama it is otherwise, for the playwright has no means of explanation outside his play; often (as, indeed, is exemplified in "The Master-Builder") the very episodes which the initiated would hold to be the most symbolic would appear to another as just those touches which throw the clearest light on the characters of the play, define their part therein and render them the more actual.

A *reductio ad absurdum* of the idea of minute symbolism would be such an intention as that already mentioned, with which Ibsen has deliberately been credited, namely, that in the play before us his hero represents himself and the various building designs his various works. Pushing the parallel farther, we should, I presume, see in Hilda the "Ibsenite" following! Seriously, one cannot for a moment believe that the suggestion has any authority. If it has, Ibsen the dramatist must be taking leave of his senses.

The unhappy drama has of late been laden with all sorts of strange burdens; it would be well at times to pause and consider what may legitimately be expected from it. Consistently with the desire as far as possible to enlarge the boundaries of the dramatic art and increase its possibilities, one may, I think, feel assured that those who would seek to engraft upon the drama this strange "variation" do not sufficiently realise that different arts are regulated by different conditions, that the art of the drama should be regarded primarily as an end and only secondarily as a means, and that there is a limit to what is rendered possible by the circumstances of stage representation.

R. FARQUHARSON SHARP.



Some London Theatres of the Past.

II.—THE WHITEFRIARS, SALISBURY COURT, AND DORSET GARDENS THEATRES.



THESE three houses have been considered by some chroniclers as one and the same building. Such, however, was not the case, although the two last-named were built upon the same site. There are few materials extant wherefrom to construct the history of the Whitefriars Theatre, and great diversity of opinion has existed concerning its career. It was built in the early part of the sixteenth century, and situate between the eastern gates of the Temple and Water Lane, Fleet Street.

According to a writer of the seventeenth century, it was one of those pulled down by the over-zealous citizens in 1580; but Malone, on the other hand, states that the theatre, being outside the liberties of the City of London, escaped the fury of those fanatics. This is open to question, as the line of the ancient wall of the City, as delineated in the old maps, appears to have enclosed the ground plot of Blackfriars, leaving little doubt as to its including that of Whitefriars, and the theatre certainly stood within the precincts of the once notorious "kingdom of Alsatia," whose lawless origin is not recorded, but where neither the civic magistrate nor other legal officer ventured to appear until near the close of the seventeenth century. About 1697 one of the public journals relates that "the bailiffs, by holding together in a body, overcame the difficulty of making an arrest in the Whitefriars," and this being successfully repeated on two or three occasions, had the effect of ridding the locality of certain objectionable individuals, who, for their own personal security, removed to the Mint, Southwark, then equally lawless. This victory of the Law also had the effect of disbanding the once-renowned "Order of the Squires of Alsatia."

Whether the house was rebuilt after the fury of the citizens had subsided is uncertain, writers being unable to agree upon this point. Some assert that a licence was granted to erect a new house in 1613, and that it was accordingly rebuilt; others, however, are of opinion that the licence was not acted upon until 1629, and then resulted in the erection of a theatre in Salisbury Court, and accordingly named the Salisbury Court Theatre.

This last view seems more probable, and will account for the difficulty of discovering anything further concerning the Whitefriars Theatre after this date; and it must therefore be accepted that it was not rebuilt after its destruction by the furious citizens.

The Salisbury Court Theatre was termed a "private house," as were also the Blackfriars and the Cockpit in Drury Lane, all three, we are told, being "built almost exactly alike for form and bigness, the pits enclosed for the gentry, and the plays acted by candle-light." The meaning assigned to "private house" is that the theatre was roofed over, thus doing away with the open yard, and ensuring a more select and respectable audience. From the opening lines of the prologue to Marryon's "Holland's Leaguer" (1632), it would seem that the first proprietors of this house were not successful in their venture—

"Gentle spectators, who with graceful eye,
Come to behold the Muses' colonie;
New planted in this soil: forsook of late
By the inhabitants, since made fortunate
By more propitious stars," etc., etc.

This comedy was given on several occasions by Prince Charles and his servants, and always well received, as was also "Woman is a Weathercock," a comedy printed in 1612, and performed privately at this theatre by "The Children of the Reuels."

During the memorable period of the Commonwealth, when multitudes were ready to combine for the destruction of theatres *en masse*, this house remained closed. Immediately after the Restoration (June, 1660) it was reopened by a newly-organised company, under the management of the veteran William Beeston; but in the following November was taken over by Sir William Davenant whose company played here alternately with the Cockpit until their removal, in 1662, to the new theatre in Portugal Row. The greatest success of the last-named company was "The Rump," a comedy written by John Tatham, which also enjoyed many revivals. This house was demolished in 1669, to provide the site of the Dorset Gardens Theatre.

This building has been variously called the Dorset Gardens Theatre, the Duke of York's Theatre, the Duke's Theatre, and the Queen's Theatre, being re-christened according to changes at Court.

Sir William Davenant, finding the theatre in Portugal Row inadequate in respect of size, projected a more convenient one on the site of the Salisbury Court house, the Patent of January, 1662, granting him power to build "in the cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof." He accordingly obtained the co-operation of Sir Christopher Wren, from whose designs the new house was erected. It has been asserted that Sir William Davenant directed the attention of Sir Christopher Wren to exterior decoration; certain it is that this was the first theatre that could boast of any pretension to external beauty. The front was of southern aspect, with a portico and two

smaller arches for the convenience of carriages. In the interior were busts of the principal dramatic poets. This part of the ornamentation was evidently an innovation, for Dryden satirically alluded to them, in an epilogue delivered at the opening of Drury Lane in 1674, as follows :—

“Though in their house the poets’ heads appear,
We hope we may presume their wits are here.”

The cost of the building and its decoration was £5,000.

Although dramatic representations had been given on this spot for nearly a century previous, the project received considerable opposition from the citizens. According to Baxter, the Lord Mayor appealed to the King to stop the building operations, because “the youth of the City were so corrupted by hurtful pleasures.” The King, however, did not grant his suit.

The new house was opened by the widow of Sir William Davenant, with the Duke of York’s Company, on the 9th of November, 1671, Dryden’s comedy, “*Sir Martin Marall*,” being chosen for the opening piece, Betterton, Kynaston, Hart, Tony Leigh, Lady Slingsby* and Mrs. Betterton sustaining the principal characters. This comedy enjoyed some popularity, having had a successful run at the Portugal Row Theatre, and having been performed at Court on four occasions.

A point worthy of note in the history of this house lies in the fact of its being the first to introduce farce and comic opera to the English stage. Otway is responsible for the curtain-raiser, the first being entitled, “*The Cheats of Scapin*,” which preceded his tragedy of “*Titus and Berenice*,” and was given in consequence of the tragedy not being sufficient for the evening’s bill. The initiative was quickly followed by others, and the farce became an institution. The first operas were—“*The Empress of Morocco*,” “*Psyche*,” “*Circe*,” “*The World in the Moon*,” and Dryden’s adaptation of “*The Tempest*.” In the last-named the celebrated Joe Haynes made his appearance as a dancer, having acquired this accomplishment in Paris; and to him the success of the opera was unquestionably due.

The cost of mounting and producing this galaxy of splendour, however—which, according to the newspapers of the period, were extravagantly elaborate—left but little remuneration for the artistes, and finally resulted in the amalgamation with their rivals, the King’s servants, at Drury Lane; the agreement (July, 1682) stating that they were to “promote with all their power and interest a good feeling between both playhouses.” Performances were then given alternately at each house, which resulted in a more satisfactory financial condition.

On August 10th, 1682, Lady Slingsby and Mrs. Behn, the writer, were taken into custody by order of the Lord Chamberlain on the

*Lady Slingsby was the pseudonym of Mrs. Aldridge. She also appeared as Mrs. Mary Lee.

charge of reflecting upon the Duke of Monmouth in a part of the epilogue to "Romulus and Hirsilia ; or, the Sabine War," but were released on the agreement to suppress the offending lines. This house was also the scene of two duels. Charles Deering (son to Sir Edward Dering) and a Mr. Vaughan, having quarrelled in the pit, mounted the stage and fought desperately, Deering being severely wounded (though not fatally, as it proved) and Vaughan arrested. The second took place in the pit, between a Mr. Scroop and Sir Thomas Armstrong, the former receiving a death-wound.

In February, 1685, upon the accession to the throne of the Duke of York, the theatre was re-named the Queen's Theatre ; and in compliment to the patroness, new yellowmetal checks were cast, on one side of which, in bas-relief, was the head of Maria d'Este, and the words "Queen's Theatre"; on the obverse, "For the pit, 1685." Similar checks were also cast for the upper and lower galleries, and worded accordingly.

"The World in the Moon," which was produced in 1696, was the first theatrical performance to be advertised through the medium of the Press. It was written by Elkanah Settle, whose versatile genius supplied either opera, city pageant, or Bartholomew Fair drollery ; but although advertised "such as never was before seene," it proved the death-blow to theatrical representations at this house.

In that plot-creating age a cry was raised, in the same year (1696), against the stage and performers generally ; the Lord Mayor forbade the posting of theatrical notices in the streets, and according to a newspaper account, "the playhouse in Dorset Gardens was beset by musqueteers and searched by messengers." There is no record of any dramatic performance after this.

The following year (1697) the house was employed for drawing penny lotteries, after which there were displays of pugilism, and the building was totally deserted in 1703. After remaining empty for six years, it was demolished in April, 1709, the site for many years afterwards being used as a timber-yard. The offices of the New River Company were erected on this spot about 1812.



The Phantom Debtors.

(For Recitation.)



WAS sitting in my study, in the fading light of eve,
By the firelight warm and ruddy, which I didn't
like to leave :

I was dozing, half-reposing, in the twilight of the mind,
When Memory's gates, unclosing, show the scenes
we've left behind.

I saw the lost, the dearest, and I grasped their phantom hands,
And relatives the nearest, tho' afar in foreign lands ;
I saw my childhood's fancies, and my castles in the air,
My long-destroyed romances, rise again, complete and fair.

I saw my lost umbrellas, and the books, long overdue,
I'd lent to "dear old fellahs," all returned as good as new,
And I saw—O, milk and honey on the pilgrim's desert track!—
The friends who'd borrowed money, and had *come to pay it back!*

They enter'd, round me pressing, in a large and loving crowd,
With many a murmur'd blessing, and with greetings long and loud ;
Bank-notes bestrew'd the table ; gold and silver fell like dews ;
And there rose a pleasant babel, "Give us back our I.O.U's.!"

In rapture I return'd them—old and mildew'd, but intact—
With thanks, for they had earn'd them by this great and noble act,
I falter'd, much affected, "Dearest friends, you make me weep,
So kind, so unexpected—O, my gratitude is deep!"

"There are heroes famed in story—*you* are greater, in my eyes.
There are martyrs, gone to glory—*you* deserve a higher prize ;
Your deed shall be recorded—blazon'd forth from pole to pole—
And in better worlds rewarded—when the Earth hath ceas'd to roll!"

Then cordially we parted—angels visits are but brief—
And I felt quite broken-hearted—till the coin assuaged my grief—
But, alas ! while fondly gazing on that bright and goodly pile,
I awoke ! 'twas gone ! Amazing !—*I'd been dreaming all the while.*

O, cruel god of Slumber ! bringing false delusive bliss !
Why, *why* our dreams encumber with *absurdities* like this ?—
This vision, sweet and sunny, in a world so drear and black,
Of the friends who've borrowed money, and who *come to pay it back!*

WALTER PARKE.



Plays of the Month.

"THE MASTER BUILDER."

A drama in three acts, by HENRIK IBSEN. The translation by WILLIAM ARCHER and EDMUND GOSSE.

First produced at the Trafalgar Square Theatre, on Monday afternoon, February 20th, 1893.

Halvard Solness ..	Mr. HERBERT WARING.	Ragnar Brovik ..	Mr. PHILIP CUNINGHAM.
Mrs Solness ..	Miss LOUISE MOODIE.	Kala Fosli ..	Miss MARIE LINDEN.
Dr. Herdal ..	Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP.	Hilda Wangel ..	Miss ELIZABETH ROBINS.
Knut Brovik ..	Mr. ATHOL FORDE.		

Solness, the Master Builder, is a "man of mature age, healthy, and vigorous," but for all that not an example of *mens sana in corpore sano*. He suffers from a sickly conscience. He believes that it is possible, by willing and praying and desiring a thing, to bring that thing to pass; and on this ground holds himself responsible for all the misfortunes of his life, and the lives of those around him. When he was unknown he wished and craved the destruction of the house he and his wife lived in, that in building on its ruins he could reveal his genius as an architect. The house did burn, and in consequence his fame and fortune were established, but his only children perished indirectly through the fire, and their death he lays on his own shoulders. The joylessness of his wife—a depressing woman, a grizzling martyr to duty, who revels in the woeful luxury of martyrdom—this also he lays to his account. Upon her happiness he has mounted to success. To give his vocation as a master-builder scope he has been the means of denying her the exercise of hers—the building up of little children's souls. (In this he is quite mistaken, for the loss of her babes does not trouble her in the least. They are far happier than with her, she says, and one can readily believe it. What she does mope about, and mourn, is the loss of the laces and gowns and jewels and her nine lovely dolls in that disastrous fire. But this error is characteristic of the man.) Further, he has lost faith in himself. He sees young men of promise ready to step into his shoes, to cast him from his place. He stands in deadly terror of the young generation. Every moment he expects to hear them knock at his door, crying out "make room," and one of them does dramatically knock upon his very words—Hilda Wangel, a girl with a robust conscience, a radiant face and a sturdy frame. Ten years before, she being then a child of twelve or thirteen, Solness had kissed her, called her his Princess, and promised to return in ten years and give her a kingdom. To claim that kingdom she has come. She has ideals. One of them is Solness. For ten years she dreamed that he would come and carry her away, like a viking of old, and build her castles in the air; and since her Mahomet did not come to the mountain at the expected time, the girl of the mountains has come to him. Solness has but a halting memory of the promise and the kiss, but he feels the exhilarating effect of this young lady from the hills, with her ringing voice and sparkling eye, a creature fair and fresh and full of lusty youth and energy, in her

blue climbing skirt and pretty gaiters and jaunty Tam O'Shanter, with knapsack and alpenstock complete—and if this is a type of the young generation he no longer feels so much afraid of them. Her energy and boundless faith infect him. At her bidding he throws down the sordid defences within which he had intrenched himself. Ragnar, his clever young pupil, shall have the chance of rivalling his master. Solness will no longer suck his brains and chain him by his love for Kaia, a girl-clerk over whom Solness has a strange hypnotic power. From Hilda he draws inspiration, new ambitions; and she spurs him on to build those castles in the air she has so long desired, to enthrone her in that kingdom she has come to claim. But his nerve is not what she thinks it. What to her dauntless spirit appears very possible, is to him impossible. She bids him, in proof of his readiness to build that castle in the air, hang a wreath on the vane of the lofty tower of his new house. He does so, but, disturbed by her wild cries of triumph, loses his balance, and is dashed to pieces, without however shaking her iron nerves or affecting her exultant mood, which continues to the fall of the curtain. What this extraordinary piece of work may mean, Dr. Ibsen alone can know. Perhaps it is an essay in Browningism, an expression of genius so perfect that everyone may find in it precisely the problem that confronts him, the solution that he seeks. There is room for a score of interpretations: "Beware of willing, praying, desiring *anything*—if you have a sickly conscience;" "If, like Macbeth and Mr. Bumpus, you want to 'get on,' don't let 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.'" "Don't kiss a child of thirteen, if you're a married man, or it may end in your death." Is any of these the moral of the play? Or is it that the paths of duty and ambition—typified in Mrs. Solness and her husband—lead alike to misery! Or that the old ideas (Solness), let them be dragged as they may into line with the new (Hilda), must inevitably perish! Or that the very pursuit of the well-beloved (as Mr. Hardy calls it) ensures destruction! Or that the idealistic in woman asks too much of man, or that only in that supreme victory over self which is mere self-extinction is man worthy of the name! What is it? Presumably there is more in the play than meets the eye. Otherwise it is a very uneven, exasperating, and inconclusive jumble of brilliance and dulness, lucidity and obscurity. But what that particular more is, each must decide for himself. Many of the passages are strong, and compel attention for the moment. Several scenes are instinct with drama. But the characters of Solness and Hilda are vague, elusive, utterly wanting in sustained reality. At every turn, moreover, they bring one into a blind alley, so to speak, and turn one back with the sense of having been rudely made a fool of. And but for the truly remarkable and brilliant acting of Miss Robins and Mr. Waring, it is hard to imagine an average audience having the patience to sit it through. Their grip and intensity, and apparent belief in the humanity of Solness and Hilda, are however to be classed among the worthiest achievements of the modern stage. The Hilda, frequently compared to the dawning of day, the rising of the sun, and so on, and equal to rendering those comparisons wondrously vivid and eloquent, is indeed a marvellous effort. From beginning to end there is not the faintest trace of Miss Robins—Miss Robins of the musical low voice, love of the minor chords, somewhat lackadaisical manner, and crushed and broken

expression. All the customary tell-tale characteristics have vanished, and in their place is as radiant, vigorous, determined, buoyant a girl as one could well conceive. The stage is lightened by her presence. She seems to dissipate the gloom, just as Solness says. She is the embodiment of youth and health and brightness, and a robust conscience. The study is cleverer even than her Hedda Gabler, cleverer even than Miss Achurch's first Nora Helmer. Mr. Waring, too, strides forward with his Solness. He cannot make the man a complete reasonable being, but scene by scene he cheats us into the belief that he is real. The recitals of his strange convictions are absorbing, the tight hold he gets at the beginning is never relaxed, and he proves once again—not that proof was wanted—that in puzzling complex studies like these he is without a rival. Miss Moodie played upon her pathetic notes with direfully depressing results as the miserable Mrs. Solness. Miss Marie Linden, girlish and pretty and helpless, was the hypnotised Kaia. Mr. Beauchamp had the liveliest and sanest part in the piece, as a chatty old doctor. And Mr. Cunningham as a down trodden genius poured out his bitterness with discreet restraint. Occasionally an unkind laugh—a laugh at the dramatist—broke upon the stillness of the air, but for the most part the play was listened to in respectful (not to say reverential) silence, and the unanimous applause of a crowded house apparently sealed it a success—in proof whereof the drama was transferred to the Vaudeville for a regular “run” on Monday evening, March 6th, when Mr. Charles Allan replaced Mr. Beauchamp as the cheery medico, and Mr. Charles Fulton resumed a line of character for which he has a unique reputation—characters who die or disappear in the first act—by filling Mr. Forde's shoes as Knut Brovick, the victim of inanition.

“THE STRIKE AT ARLINGFORD.”

A play in three acts, by GEORGE MOORE.

First produced, under the auspices of the Independent Theatre Society, at the Opera Comique Theatre, on Tuesday evening, February 21st, 1895.

Baron Steinbach ..	MR. CHARLES FULTON.	Footman	MR. AKERMAN MAY,
Hammer, a newspaper	MR. CHARLES ROCK.	Fox { miners ..	MR. H. F. SPIER.
reporter		Simon {	MR. M. HERAPATH.
John Reid, a socialist		Lady Anne Travers ..	MISS FLORENCE WEST.
leader	MR. BERNARD GOULD.	Ellen Sands	MISS ELSIE CHESTER.

With much to be commended in Mr. Moore's play, there is much to be deplored. He has chosen a fine theme, splendidly human, rarely dramatic. He has put upon the stage three people at least who never found themselves there before, and he has breathed life into their nostrils. Yet on the whole it had been better had he never accepted the challenge thrown down by Mr. Sims, on behalf of himself and his Moore-baited fellow authors, that the possible new and original “unconventional” play did not exist. Years before the play begins, Reid, a boyish secretary, fell in love with his employer's daughter. She encouraged him, and then upon not unwise reflection, jilted him. He carried with him through a desperately hard literary life, a broken heart, until he met one Ellen Sands, who diverted his thoughts from himself and his disappointed-love poems to the cause of labour, and turned him into orator and strike-leader. With the opening of the play he meets his old sweetheart again. She is the owner of a mine, the workers of which he is leading in a strike for a great advance in wages. She is also a widow, and young and very dangerous. She has a suitor, a millionaire financier, whom she has

cared for—cares for still in a way, and who urges his suit with persistence, but some warmer feeling re-awakens at sight of her boy-lover, and she elects to give it play. Speedily she regains her old ascendancy over the socialist-poet, and he—not for her sake, but the starving men's—convinced by her books that the terms they ask would ruin the mine, uses his influence to induce them to return to work. Steinbach, however, piqued by her preference for Reid, divulges to a pushing interviewer the story of Lady Anne's and Reid's boy-and-girl engagement, and the leader's influence is undermined. Still, the men are at the last gasp and bound to yield, when Reid receives a cheque for a large sum in the cause of the strike. If he pays it in to the committee, Lady Anne will be ruined; if he withholds it, the strike must end. He juggles with his conscience and, again "for the men's sake," says nothing of it. But the girl he is to marry, a socialist—"whose socialism is uninfluenced by such trivial things as facts and figures"—gets wind of the letter and the cheque, and the men rise against him. In vain he defends his action; they lynch him. He escapes badly hurt to find Lady Anne—for love of whom he has risked his life—in the act of flight with the capitalist Baron; and this last avenue of hope being closed, he commits suicide before the rioting mob can break in and kill him. The Samson and Delilah interest is always good, whether clothed in the classic raiment of "Clito" or the slop-shop serge and primrose satin of "The Strike," but somehow Mr. Moore works it awkwardly. His capitalist is excellent, specious, natural, and fair. Out of him and the impossible reporter, he gets good comedy scenes. His arguments on either side, ranging over vast ground, from Political Economy and the Factory Acts to the age of the Pompadour, are well put, and keep interest in the characters alive. But the central theme is tamely handled. There is no fight between the women—typical of Capital and Labour—for the omnipotent Reid. Lady Anne gets him for the asking. The momentous nature of the struggle was never felt. The scent of the strikers was never got over the footlights. The play did not palpitate as it should with the passions of the starving miners. Reid reflected nothing but himself. Lady Anne seemed fighting for no stake in particular. Worst of all, the people expressed themselves in language over which lay the trail of the literary man. Nothing destroys the sense of reality like high falutin' phrases, and in "The Strike" Mr. Moore's heroine being a little upset is "distraught," his hero's thoughts "throng his brain in giddy exultation," and so on—the result being that half the house speedily comes to the conclusion that not one of the characters, save the Baron, has anything in his veins but midnight oil and ink. Mr. Fulton easily carried off the honours, with a light and natural rendering of a highly effective part. Miss Chester lifted the final scene—the farewell between her false lover and her—to a fine level of feeling. And Mr. Rock spoke the impossible reporter's lines with effect. Mr. Gould looked the leader perfectly. The artist in him spoke to some purpose in clothes and manner and make-up. But his voice and bearing lacked the weight and fire of a leader of rough men, and only at the last did he really rise to the occasion. Miss West, too, failed to make of Lady Anne what the dramatist evidently intended. She was graceful, winning, and feminine, but not the woman to make a hero faithless to his cause—to bring him to moral bankruptcy. Acted with greater force the drama would, I think, have created a deeper impression.

"THE IRONMASTER."

A play in four acts, adapted by A. W. PINERO.

Re-produced at the Avenue Theatre on Thursday evening, March 2nd, 1893.

Philippe Derblay ..	Mr. KENDAL.	Young Gobert	Mr. HOWARD STURGE.
Duc de Bilgny	Mr. F. H. MACKLIN.	Mouchot	Mr. HARRIS.
Octave	Mr. H. NYE CHART.	Servant	Mr. SHARPE.
Baron de Préfont ..	Mr. OSCAR ADYE.	Marquise de Beaupré	Miss F. BENNETT.
Moulinet	Mr. J. E. DODSON.	Baronne de Préfont ..	Miss ANNETTE IRISH.
Bécholln	Mr. G. FARQUHAR.	Athénals	Miss A. DAIROLLES.
Général de Pontac ..	Mr. G. P. HUNTLEY.	Suzanne Derblay	Miss N. CAMPBELL.
Dr. Servan	Mr. OWENS.	Brigette	Miss B. HUNTLEY.
Old Gobert	Mr. H. DEANE.	Claire de Beaupré ..	Mrs. KENDAL.

Claire de Beaupré could never lag superfluous on the stage in Mrs. Kendal's hands. "Age might wither her and custom stale her infinite variety" of jilting and love-hungering moods, but like the Serpent of Old Nile she would still attract, still win love. None but wise youths of the Adrian and Octavian schools, and men of blood and iron, could resist the fascination of so subtle a piece of femininity. A woman of heart and art in equal proportions, she stands for the sex, and therefore—although for Claire's perfect physical realisation the actress is too late a day—cannot but focus the eyes of such as find the sex absorbing. This it is to which I think the vast success of the popular PinerOhnette should be attributed. Strip the play of its fallals and trimmings, and there will be found a common melodrama shivering in its nakedness. Look at it in its dainty draperies and you will find that it presents as delicately-daring a picture of the influence of sex as ever fluttered curious human nature. Someone—and someone in authority, not a mere scribe—has recently charged Mrs. Kendal with a "kind of moral squeamishness." Claire establishes the absurdity of the charge. Mrs. Kendal may shy at adventures parts and prefer, like many of her sisters, Miss Ellen Terry first among them, the noble, the beautiful, and the true; but she is too much of an artist to omit one touch that is essential to the complete understanding of the woman she portrays. "Moral squeamishness," forsooth! when one can recall a scene like that of her temptation in "Mayfair!" "Moral squeamishness," in the face of Claire's post-nuptial interview with her unloved mate. Truth to tell, Mrs. Kendal always goes for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and under the circumstances it is perhaps as well that she cultivates that pardonable abhorrence of hers of women who flaunt the "roses and raptures" device. British taste in these matters is not robust—witness poor Mr. Grant Allen's discomfiture, and as yet we are unprepared for a full length, faithful portrait of Belladonna. No better proof exists of Mrs. Kendal's courage than her treatment of one episode in this trumpery "Ironmaster." Nine years ago she sent a cold shiver down my back with the same bit of business; and to-day in spite of the lapse of years and an increasing indifference to things, Miss Hilda Wangel would call "frightfully thrilling," she repeats the achievement. How simple a matter it is moreover! Claire is left at midnight face to face with the man she has married and does not love; a door bangs upon the departure of her last friend—she is on the threshold of a new world. A frightened look comes into her eyes, she catches a quick gasping breath, and starts to fly, but terror rivets her feet to the floor, and she can only plead mutely with her hunted eyes—a dove in the hands of the fowler. Here is tragedy, the tragedy suffered by every sensitive girl who marries where she does not love. Tragedy without raving or violence. The dumb tragedy of deadly fear endured while the executioner's blow is

delayed. Claire at this moment becomes any woman, every woman. She stands for the sex. Rob her of that magnificent physique, and she stands for the most tragical of girlish heroines, that other Clare, of the rippling melodious name, Clare Doria Forey. So to set one's thoughts a-travelling over countless moving scenes, of like import, so to leave upon the mind an impress of truth applicable in sum and detail to every woman so circumstanced, is high art, and were there nothing clever, but that one moment in all Mrs. Kendal's performance, her Claire de Beaupré should rank as a fine piece of work. Pity that there is not better opportunity elsewhere for a like display of the intuition and imagination which the actress here exhibits. In most respects the play as a whole is well done, but no acting is on the same plane with hers. Mr. Kendal is picturesque, dignified, and forcible. He shows, too, a hitherto unrecognised or unappreciated mastery over heroic methods of expressing emotion. There is a largeness and a simplicity about his work which was not visible before the fortune-making trip to the States. Miss Dairolles is another who acts spiritedly, with decision and with fire. Mr. Dodson is worthier of better things than Moulinet, whom he plays with sly, dry humour. But Mr. Macklin surely is mis-cast as the Duke. Stolid amiability radiates from his handsome massive frame. Was the Duc de Bligny like that?

"ALEXANDRA."

A play in four acts, adapted from the German of Dr. RICHARD VOSS.
First produced at the Royalty Theatre on Saturday evening, March 4th, 1892.

Eric, Lord Knowlesford.	Mr. HERBERT FLEMING.	Walter	Mr. C. DOUGLAS COX.
Jack Othwaite	Mr. EDMUND MAURICE.	Lady Knowlesford.	Mrs. THEODORE WRIGHT.
Anthony Want	Mr. CHAS. CHARRINGTON.	Mrs. Bradley	Miss ANNA HARDINGE.
Robert Ash	Mr. JOHN CARTER.	Chambermaid	Miss IDA SALA.
Dr. Howarth	Mr. CHARLES ROCK.	Sarah Chubb	Miss ROSE NESBITT.
Rev. Charles Bevan	Mr. GILBERT TRENT.	Mary Chubb	Miss L. HUDSON.
Van Noorden	Mr. H. DE LANGE.	Charlotte	Miss HETTY LAURENCE.
Dicker	Mr. W. R. STAVELEY.	Alexandra.	Miss JANE ACHURCH.

Alexandra is but a statelier sister of Hetty Sorrel. Hetty, being simple and flighty and accessible to flattery, was as you remember easily seduced, and by force of circumstances impelled to murder her child. Her story is Alexandra's up to the point of compassing the child's death, but in the latter instance the young mother's hands are guiltless of blood, though her conscience forced her to plead guilty, and like Hetty she suffered years of imprisonment for the alleged crime. Hetty, however, remained simple and weak and silly to the last, but Alexandra did not. In prison the heroines part company. It is all very well to excuse a *faux pas* by assertions of ignorance, innocence, and a yielding nature, but it would never do to dower your betrayed and abandoned with these qualities if she is to tread the stage as heroine. Hence Alexandra changes her nature in prison, and leaves Portland just before the curtain rises possessed of one idea—revenge. Lord Knowlesford never knew of the child's death. Indeed he lost sight of his victim long before its birth. The course of Alexandra's vengeance therefore is readily shaped. The libertine is a peer and proud. His blind mother is prouder still. The convict will resume her sway over the man, induce him to marry her, and when his wife reveal the fact that she has been condemned for murder. Unfortunately she reckons without one of the compensating virtues of this haughty pair. If they are proud, they are also just. It needs but a recital of half her sufferings to bring

Knowlesford to her feet. He is seized with remorse. He will make her his wife. More, he will take her to his mother. So, too, when presented to the blind dame, Alexandra finds her work immediately done. The white-haired Lady Knowlesford is the incarnation of Justice. Even down to the blindness the parallel is complete. How could such a woman hear the pitiful story (*i.e.*, as much of it as suits Alexandra to tell) unmoved. The poor lady suffers. The tale of her idolised boy's iniquities wrings her heart. But the sense of justice conquers. She accepts "Miss Random" as her son's affianced bride. It is always the unexpected that happens, and this case is no exception. The tenderness and clemency Alexandra meets with are precisely what she was not prepared for, and the Statue of Vengeance is shaken on her self-erected pedestal. Humanity makes human says the sage, and deep-down beneath that facing of Portland stone throbs a human heart reluctantly responsive to the gentleness and love which now beat sunnily upon her. The seven years' frozen love is thawed and freely flows towards the man who now she sees sincerely loves her. But her own act debars her from enjoyment of this happiness. She withheld the story of her conviction as a murderess. To tell it now, urged as she is to do so by her disinterested friend the Q.C., whose pleadings saved her the death punishment, were to bring down upon her benefactress and her lover almost as much misery and shame as she in her revengeful scheme had designed for them. Her courage fails her. She will grasp at the happiness within her reach. Her lips shall remain closed. But a god out of a machine, a daft valet, is found to let the secret out. Ruffled pride with set lip and bristling white locks turns its severely just back upon her. Upon a hypothetical case the lover pronounces adversely. "No man of honour could live upon discovering that his wife was a convicted murderess." So the poor creature adds one more to the sacrifices she has made for this "man of honour," and in a phial of morphia finds her Waters of Lethe. Sombre, depressing, the play yet proved profoundly affecting, but the public (suspicious of heroines who go astray in youth, saving only "The New Magdalen") would have none of it. Not even the (occasionally) great acting of Miss Achurch, supremely picturesque of actresses, could lure them to the shades. Well, they lost something. That grey face set in a flaming frame of hair, those passionless eyes, those tones and gestures dictated by an iron resolution, could never be forgotten. It was a piece of picture-acting to be set beside Mr. Irving's dotard Onze-Louis. Mrs. Wright played pathetically, if with a tendency to drag her scenes, and Mr. Flemming combined tenderness with manly strength with notable success, Mr. Charrington bringing his quiet intensity to bear upon the half-witted valet. "Alexandra" was replaced on Saturday, March 18th, by "A Doll's House," in which Miss Achurch, Mr. Charrington, and Mr. Flemming resumed Nora, Torvald, and Krogstad, Miss Carlotta Addison being seen as the gentle Mrs. Linden, and Mr. W. R. Staveley following discreetly in the well marked footsteps of previous Dr. Ranks.

"THE AMAZONS."

An original farcical romance, in three acts, by ARTHUR WING PINERO.

First produced at the Court Theatre on Tuesday evening, March 7th, 1893.

Galfred, Earl of Tweenways	Mr. W. GROSSMITH.	Miriam, Marchioness of Castlejordan	Miss ROSE LECLERCQ.
Barrington Viscount Litterly	Mr. F. KERR.	Lady Noeline Belturbet	Miss LILY HANBURY.
Andre, Count de Grival	Mr. ELLIOT.	Lady Wilhelmina Belturbet	Miss E. TERRISS.
Rev. Roger Mitchin	Mr. J. BEAUCHAMP.	Lady Thomasin Belturbet	Miss PATTIE BROWNE.
Filton	Mr. W. QUINTON.	"Sergeant" Shuter	Miss M. CALDWELL.
Yonatt	Mr. COMPTON COURTS.		
Orts	Mr. R. NAINBY.		

Lady Castlejordan and her husband, the Marquis, were muscular Christians, and counted nothing as honours but Sandown achievements. Consequently, when the first baby was declared to be a girl, they felt the pangs of disappointment. All that the Marquis said, as he bent over his recumbent spouse, was "Damn it all, Miriam, you've lost the season's hunting for nothing," but he took the matter to heart, and when her ladyship repeated the programme, in every particular, and even accepted a second encore, he felt there was only one thing to be done—educate the three girls as boys. It was the sole way out of the melancholy maternal muddle, as the widowed Lady Castlejordan emphatically asserts to the protesting vicar, during a brief discussion in "The Tangle," a lovely bit of wild woodland situate in the heart of Overcote Park. The girls have been brought up to ape the hardier sex in dress, in pastimes, in everything. "Good man!" they cry to one another, and the servants respect the tradition and allude to them as Lords Noel, Willie, and Tommie. When, however, the cat's away (not that Lady Castlejordan deserves the appellation) the mice will play, no matter how carefully they have been brought up as bold, dashing young rats, and Willie and Tommie while on a visit to Scotland, in skirts be it noted, have tasted the joys of flirtation, and on the whole approved them. Lady Noeline, too, has discovered that her heart is not so masculine as she thought it. Exploring the West (and "worst," her cousin Litterly insinuates) end of London, in another cousin's "ridiculous trousers," Inverness, etc., she floored a brute who was mauling a woman, got in for a row, fled in dismay, and fainted in the arms of a man. Coming to she found herself on a sofa in a strange room, and borrowing a cap from her rescuer made her escape, to discover that during the *mêlée*, or after, she had lost an heirloom, a treasured old ring. There are thus three lovers, who naturally complete the picture. Boyish girls demand of course the contrast of effeminate youths. Tweenways has spindleshanks and a thin voice, consumptive tendencies, and no digestion. His family, "we" as he usually says, made history, but he is afraid of cows. He pursues the hoydenish Lady Thomasin. De Grival is an Anglo-maniac who misquotes English proverbs, and concludes each sentence in truly British style with "Don't you know" or "Dammit all." His quarry is the dainty little maiden, Wilhelmina, who has for some time feared she was "growing effeminate," and begun to doubt her masculine mother's wisdom. Noeline's lover is the mysterious midnight saviour, and by good luck her muscular and every way manly cousin Lord Litterly, heir to the title, and therefore a sharp (and a vigorously cut) thorn in the bosom of his disappointed aunt. The three Orlandos seek their three Rosalinds in Overcote-Arden, and farce succeeds romance, romance farce, in rapid and witty and winning succession, ere the girls grown venturesome invite their lovers to the Hall in Lady

Castlejordan's absence, and are caught in the midst of their high jinks, by her ladyship and the parson—a preliminary to the acceptance of the muscular Litterly, who “has biceps just like my Jack” as a suitor for Noeline's hand. Mr. Elliott's work is most popular, and also most dexterous. His explosive Frenchman is an extremely clever piece of acting. Mr. Grossmith is quaint of course, but a little heavy and slow as the puny lordling. But Mr. Kerr's imperturbable Litterly is a man after Lady Castlejordan's and everyone else's heart. The Rosalinds are charming, Miss Terriss most naturally so, Miss Hanbury with most artistic skill, Miss Browne by force of *chic* and dash and racy fun. “The Amazons” cannot even at its best rank with “Dandy Dick” or “The Magistrate,” but at its worst it is infinitely clever than farce as she is usually wrote, and for freshness and prettiness and humour and certain sly touches of poetry which dignify the trivial theme amazingly, it is not unworthy the name and record of Mr. Pinero.

“THE GOLDEN WEB.”

A new three-act comedy-opera, composed by GORING THOMAS; libretto by F. CORDER and B. C. STEPHENSON.

First produced at the Lyric Theatre, Saturday evening, March 11th, 1893.

Dr. Manacle	Mr. WALLACE BROWNLOW.	Mistress Pamela }	Madame AMADI.
Lord Silvertop ..	Mr. RICHARD TEMPLE.	Patch }	
Bullion	Mr. FURNEAUX COOK.	Mrs. Scatterwell ..	Miss DORA THORNE.
Geoffrey Norreys..	Mr. T. A. SHALE.	Mrs. Pounceby ..	Miss EMMERLINE ORFORD.
Spindle	Mr. W. S. LAIDLAW.	Amabel	Miss ALICE ESTY.
Smug	Mr. ARTHUR WILKINSON.		

Another “Dorothy” was what those in the know early whispered of the opera, but alas! “Dorothys” are not made by composers, nor by librettists. They grow at the sweet will of the “people,” and the “people,” whether busied about revolution or recreation, overturning thrones or setting up idols in players and plays, is a puzzling creature. No one ever did or ever could satisfactorily explain—to anyone but himself—why “Dorothy” made a fortune of £100,000, but everyone will find it simple as A B C to give a bushel of reasons why “The Golden Web” cannot possibly follow that golden example. And when all the dire predictions are recorded, the “people” will very likely take it into its multitudinous head to falsify the lot! That shall not, however, deter me from giving my reasons and framing my gloomy prophecy. First, then, observe that Goring Thomas, whose sad death invests the opera with such pathetic interest, was surely not the man for a work like this. Nothing in “Esmeralda” or “Nadeshda” gives promise of any bent for comedy music. Delicate fancy, grace, fluency, and charm—yes! but the musical humour beloved of “the people”—no! “The Golden Web” to be popular—and if it have not the makings of a popular work, why produce it in a theatre and lavish upon it all the costly resources of the light-operative millionaire-manager?—should have had roysterous drinking songs, songs with the throb and thrill of passion, quaint old ditties to tickle the ear, romantic strains to ravish it. Dainty melody, musicianly taste—in profusion—will not compensate “the people” for the absence of these. Hence “The Golden Web” has shortcomings on the composer's side. But not half, or anything like half, the wants are to be credited to him. If the compositions he has written are not of the right kind, neither is the book one to draw out such popular qualities as his melodic fancy undoubtedly possessed. Indeed for a libretto by gentlemen conversant with the stage, and learned in the tastes of comic-opera-goers, it is of unaccountable feebleness.

One would have thought that Mr. Walter Besant's sweet romance, "The Chaplain of the Fleet," would have furnished forth as pretty a stage-play as any author—hung up for a novel background, romantic episodes, and a wholesome love-story (in a picturesque period)—could possibly desire. But as out of the mouths of fools cometh wisdom, so from the pens of practised writers floweth nonsense. Dull and undramatic and disappointing to a degree are story, characters, and dialogue—a consummation the more to be regretted since Mr. Horace Sedger has with unexceptionable taste and profuse liberality provided an exquisite setting for the piece, the costumes throughout and the Ranelagh Gardens scene in particular proving the generosity and resources of the management. The cast was not all it might have been, but a few did well, notably Miss Alice Esty, as Amabel, the heroine of the Fleet marriage, over which her husband is not permitted to see his bride's face, and Madame Amadi as Pamela Patch, the typical spinster of forty "and a bit," whose misdirected femininity gives such joy to the unsophisticated "people." Both ladies sang admirably and acted with spirit and effect. Mr. Richard Temple was fairly amusing as an old beau, but the Dr. Manacle, a character admitting of the introduction of great humour if not indeed demanding it, and the hero Geoffrey Norreys, left much to be desired.



Art Notes.

THE GRAFTON GALLERIES.

ONE of the most interesting events in the world of art during the present season has been the opening of the new galleries in Grafton Street. Spacious, admirably lighted, and well arranged, they bid fair to take, in more ways than one, the place of the defunct Grosvenor. The decorations and the colouring of the walls have not, it is true, met with the approval of the critics, the loud pattern of the carpet, too, jars very much upon the general harmony, but taken altogether the new gallery is a decided success and evidently much appreciated by the crowds of visitors who throng the rooms daily. As to the pictures on the walls, opinions will probably differ. The very "advanced" schools, particularly that of Glasgow, are strongly represented, while the Continental pictures are exceedingly interesting, and in the some degree a revelation to the picture-loving Londoner. M. Degas, the eminent French painter, whose work is so often discussed but so rarely seen, and who is known to the British public almost entirely by his pictures of ballet girls, is represented at the Grafton by a small canvas, utterly unattractive in subject, but so powerful in treatment and so absolutely realistic that it is altogether the most striking picture in the gallery. "L'Absinthe" (258), is simply a study of a man and woman sitting on the bench out-



“The Queen took the idle girl into three rooms that were quite full of beautiful flax. ‘Spin me this flax,’ she said; ‘and, as soon as it is finished, come to me and I will give you my eldest son for your husband.’”

By JOHN SCOTT, R.I.

Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, 1893.



COMING FROM THE WELL.

By CARLTON A. SMITH, R.I.

Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, 1893.

side one of the poorer Paris cafés, with glasses of the favourite but most destructive drink on the table before them. But the way M. Degas paints their dreadful, degraded faces, utterly sensual and utterly hopeless, must be seen to be appreciated. The pictures by



PORTIA.

By G. SMETHAM-JONES.

Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, 1893.

M. Segantini should also be noticed for their curious yet accomplished technique, although the average observer will be more struck by the extraordinary, almost inexplicable nature, of the subject of this artist's chief work, "The Punishment of Luxury" (102). Another



ANTHEA.

By SIR JAMES W. LINTON, P.R.I.

Exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, 1893.

exceedingly accomplished but enigmatic painter, M. Khnopff, also offers a problem for the visitor to solve in "Samuel and the Witch of Endor" (144). Mr. Melville's startling portrait of a lady playing the piano, which occupies one of the positions of honour in the Music Room, is presumably an experiment by that talented if erratic artist. The full length portrait of a lady with a bright yellow skin, by M. Besnard, which hangs in the same room runs Mr. Melville's work very close in point of eccentricity. But pictures like these, although eccentric, are painted by men who are really artists. Many of the pictures at the Grafton unfortunately are eccentric—perhaps comical would be a better word—without being in any degree artistic. Mr. William Stott does himself no credit by his "Iseult" (62), while another capable young painter, Mr. Frank Brangwyn, shows great deterioration in both his pictures—the great, over-ambitious "Buccaneers" with its unpleasant mosaic-like painting and the even less successful "Eve." Mr. Whistler's "Lady Meux" (44), is black and heavy, almost a monochrome in fact. A really fine and successful painting may be seen in the same room, Mr. Orchardson's portrait of Mr. Walter Gilbey, the same picture which was so recently shown in the Academy, but on that account no less welcome. The landscapes at the Grafton are not very striking. The works of this nature by members of the New Glasgow School will no doubt have a certain number of admirers, but their beauties are of too occult a character to appeal to the general public. The quaint and curious picture of "Summer" (60), by one of the Glasgow men, Mr. E. A. Hornel, should, however, be noticed. There is a certain attractiveness about it, in spite of all its oddities, which almost reconciles one to its total want of atmosphere and modelling. M. Emile Claus shows in both his pictures a remarkable faculty for rendering bright sunshine: one of them (4) seems almost to shine upon the walls. M. Khnopff shows by his little landscape studies (68 and 72) that he can paint almost anything he chooses equally well. Mr. David Murray's tiny painting of moonlight (5) is also very charming in its way. Other pictures to be noticed in this very interesting but curiously unequal collection are the portrait by M. Louis Picard (131), Mr. Dannat's study of a girl in a white dress (222); a landscape, by Mr. Wyley Grier (13); some clever water-colours by Mr. Crawhall (249, 254, 354a), and M. Raffaelli's huge portrait group of M. Clemenceau addressing a meeting of his constituents. The very decorative design which appears on the cover of the catalogue is the work of the Marchioness of Granby, some of whose clever drawings may also be found on the walls of the gallery.

THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS.

THE exhibition at the Royal Institute is just about an average one. The same careful work, and unfortunately the same threadbare subjects, may be found on all the walls, but drawings of really high quality are singularly rare. It is pleasant, however, to see Mr. E. J. Gregory, A.R.A., once more among the exhibitors, such drawings as the charming little study of a girl, "In the Dumps" (253), and "Peveril Point" (266), are among the most interesting things to be found at the Institute. Mr. Austen Brown's sombre and dignified picture of a girl carrying fresh litter to some calves in a stable, "New Bedding" (519), is another noticeable work. Mr. Walter Langley has managed

to spare one little drawing (279) from his Bond Street exhibition, and good work is shown by Mr. Rheam, Mr. Edgar Bundy, Mr. W. L. Wyllie, and others. We are glad to be able to give this month reproductions of four of the principal pictures in the exhibition, the charming little profile study of a girl's head by the President, Sir James Linton, "Anthea" (235); the quaint and fanciful picture illustrating the fairy tale of the queen who promised her son's hand to the girl who spun three rooms full of flax, rendered with peculiar happiness by Mr. John Scott (158); Mr. Smetham-Jones's picture of "Portia" in the act of addressing the judges; and the cleverly drawn and exceedingly effective study of a country girl carrying a pitcher of water along a picturesque road, in the fading evening light, "Coming from the Well" (312), by Mr. Carlton A. Smith.



Some Amateur Performances.

"ON GUARD" BY THE OLD TENISONIANS.

Did the Tenisonians but know it, they are themselves their severest judges, and unconsciously pronounce the harshest verdict upon their own powers in the tacit admission that they are best suited with so threadbare a piece of patch-work as "On Guard." True, they mounted guard in their customary strong, uncompromising fashion. Their performance was marked by a dogged determination, not unworthy of Denis Grant himself, to wear the worn garment with a distinction which should transfer attention from the robe to the wearer. Could the trick have been accomplished by dauntless energy and unflinching resolution, success would have crowned their efforts. But though energy and resolution can do much, they can't do everything, and in this instance they didn't go far towards establishing the case. Mr. L. S. Gridley was strong, dignified, and quiet as Denis—a praiseworthy piece of acting which threw into the clearest relief Mr. Vernon Smith's vigour and buoyancy as Guy Warrington. But Mr. Smith's passion was rather hysterical than forcible—a fault, however, excusable on the score of youth. Boodle is not a specimen of "crutch and toothpick," neither has he travelled seven-eighths of the road to Colney Hatch, as Mr. Tom Gilson would have us believe. Mr. F. S. Arnold was clever and consistent as Kavanagh. Mr. J. J. Duff as Grouse, worked hard for his laughs, and felt that the end justified the not wholly legitimate means; and Mr. C. F. Cartwright had much of the requisite humour and restraint for Druce. Miss Maud Dorrell was delightfully arch and airy as the merry widow; and Miss Kate Arnold was bright and winsome as Jessie. "Dearest Mamma" brought upon the scene Mrs. Gascoigne—brisk and breezy as Mamma—and Mr. Train Smith, quaintly humorous as the drowsy Browser. It brought others there too, but their efforts were chiefly remarkable for an utter lack of go. The Tenisonians might attempt something more ambitious next time. They are intelligent and they are capable. What they want is—as Byron puts it—"something craggy to break their minds on." "On Guard" and "Dearest Mamma" would not afford even "Baby Boodle" scope for that.

"CYMBELINE" BY THE IRVING CLUB.

No, there is nothing seriously amiss with the Irving Club, after all. The cloud that of late obscured their radiance has passed away. No need to take

the centre of the stage, turn on the lime-light, and sigh out Wolsey's "long farewell" to all their greatness. The highest point of that greatness may have been touched, but their performances of the 1st and 7th February, remove all fear that they are "hasting to their setting." It is a case of "Room there for 'Cymbeline,'" and an honourable position for it among the club's more noteworthy productions! With their customary courage they snatch from undeserved oblivion a stone of a worth as inestimable, a pearl as carelessly set at naught as those which figured in the ill-omened dream of the luckless Clarence. In 1744 Theophilus Cibber shook from it the dust of a century and a half, and revived it at the Haymarket with what promised to be considerable success, had not the closure been put on by the Lord Chamberlain, who—presumably upon socialistic principles—appears to have objected to any one manager holding a monopoly of the loaves and fishes. (What a boon he must have been to the less fortunate managers!) Since then its career has been as chequered as that of Micawber himself; and now we stand small chance of seeing it save at the hands of such energetic and enthusiastic students as these. In praise of what was done for the play at St. George's Hall in the way of elaborate staging, and skilful stage-management, much might, nay, should be written, were it not that the excellence of the picture forbids more than a passing mention of the frame. To do justice to Miss Olive Kennett's Imogen I should need to borrow the eloquence, if not the imagination, of the famous gardener's son of Lyons. It was sweet, true, and full of imaginative thought. Her pathos was profoundly affecting, and her more spirited moments were every whit as convincing. It was a performance a long way above amateur level, though Miss Kennett has yet to learn the judicious expenditure of nervous force. Far ahead of his companions came Mr. Rawson Buckley with a fine attempt at a piece of subtle character drawing, and with a result not far inferior to the intent. His Iachimo was a really striking piece of work. Mr. Dawson Milward acted and spoke with dignity, and made a splendid effort to get abreast of Posthumus' passion. Colonel Everitt's rage falls far short of the tempestuous, but his portrait of the choleric King was careful and, upon the whole, effective. Mr. Nettlefold focussed one feature of Cloten and left the rest alone, therefore his attempt scarcely calls for serious discussion as a likeness. Mr. E. C. Mead's Belarius was good, sound art, and Mr. Westbury Preston's ease and discretion were of invaluable service to Miss Kennett's scenes. A nice discrimination marked the acting of Mr. Cufflin and Mr. Lister; and Messrs. Winthrop, Mannering, and Arthur, were respectable. Miss Towle made a courageous attempt to suggest "that crafty devil," the Queen, but was hopelessly over-weighted by the part.

"THE PALACE OF TRUTH" AT THE YORK STREET CHAMBERS.

How do you take your poetical play? Which do you prefer left in—the poetry or the passion? Both! Nay, now prithee be less exacting, at least as far as the poor amateur is concerned. In the language of the obliging tradesman bent on foisting upon you what you don't want, he can do you a very nice article in the one line, or he can match your requirements almost to a nicety in the other, but a combination of the two, he has not, as a rule, in stock. Neither had the little company of actors at the York Street Chambers. There was poetry, pure and undefiled, supplied by the actresses, and on the part of the actors, stern uncompromising prose. You could, as the poet puts it, "take yer ch'ice." Here, on the one hand, was Mr. Marshall—an actor of *threw and sinew*—setting foppish Philamir on his legs and making a man of him in spite of himself, breathing into him a fire and resolution to serve the turn of a hero of romance rather than so poor a thing as this Fairy Prince, going, so to speak, straight for the strong effects and willing to let musical delivery, graceful gesture, and such-like trifles go hang. And there forming the completest possible contrast, was Miss Foley, a dream of grace, and speaking her verse with infinite taste, but recking nothing of faithless Mirza's force and passion—sending you empty away with what Mrs. Porcher would call the "rigidly musical cadences of the human voice" when you asked for a note of tragic intensity. Miss Bass stood out as the exception which went to prove the rule. She, too, is poetical, but in

the poetry she does not lose sight of the drama, and of Zeolide she made a true and tender figure. Phanor should have fitted Mr. Colley Salter like a glove. No other name rises more glibly to the lips in connection with the part. And yet, since the spell of that most embarrassing palace is upon me, I must fain admit that he was just a wee bit disappointing (judged that is by his own standard)—that he took the old King's humour, as the Englishman is said to take his pleasure, a trifle too seriously. And Mrs. Christina Dening as his wife was the same, "only more so." The coquette was touched in with dainty art by Miss Watt, and a charming Palmis was available in Miss Mary Meldrum—better known as an actress under another name. Messrs. Ward and Maunders, if a little deficient in grace, found it an easy task to be amusing as the abusive courtiers.

BURLESQUE AT THE ALBERT HALL.

Someone once remarked that it was a really dangerous thing to have a home—too much was expected of it. There amateur burlesque has the advantage of it. Nothing is expected from the latter, and so scarce a member of the audience that is not in that beatific state which is supposed to be the peculiar portion of him that looks for nothing. Which state accounts for their pathetic eagerness to snatch at the merest wraith of a joke, and hail as genius the tiniest flash of wit. An eagerness which leads one to speculate with Jerome upon the possible consequences of supplying them with a really good joke. It seems though as if, in this direction, a watchful providence would see that their powers of endurance are not put to the test. At any rate they were spared as far as "The Baron's Daughter; or, Mine Host of the Flagon," by Messrs Bowles and Phillips, was concerned. Its fun was strictly non-intoxicant, warranted not to affect the weakest head in creation. But if the play ran some risk of being apostrophised, according to the favourite phrase of the defunct Dancing-girl, as "dull and stupid" not so the players. Mr. Stephen of the nimble legs and with a rich store of comical invention, danced and drolled to his own and the audience's content, and Mr. Bedwell, donning the skirts as an elderly spinster of flirty propensities, contrived to be phenomenally funny and shared with Mr. Stephen the honours of the evening. Messrs. Fearnley and Courtney, over anxious to act as finger posts pointing out where the laugh came in, worked hard with less success, and Miss Kathleen Hall coquetted gracefully. A smaller part was partially filled by Mr. Courtney, that is to say he contributed the songs, the prompter contributed the words, and the business was not contributed at all.

"TIME AND THE HOUR" BY THE BURLINGTON CLUB.

Amateurs as a rule don't shine in melodrama. Neatly finished work, nicely calculated little effects, and careful character studies don't go for much where it's a question of fighting weight. What you want is volume—in voice, in style, in force—and they don't deal in the article in wholesale quantities. So they either miss the big situations "clane and nate" as the gamekeeper remarked of the unsuccessful sportsman, or they make a plucky attempt to rise to them, lose their nerve half way, look back to judge of the progress they have made, and share the stony fate of Lot's Wife. Therefore it was surprising to note the business-like fashion in which the Burlingtonians tackled most of the difficulties in their path. What may not be achieved by two or three standing resolutely shoulder to shoulder—if the bulk of the burden rests with them! And fortunately, with Miss Edith Jordan, Mr. John Newton and Mr. Kinsey this was the case. The comic relief was safe enough in the hands of Miss Lester and Mr. Davis, and Mr. Wood was funnily fussy, if quite impossible, as the ferreting clerk. Miss Kate Vernon was affecting as Lucy Fairfax, and Mr. Macqueen, though he lacks many of the requirements for a typical hero, was natural and earnest as her lover.



Musical Notes.

BY CLIFTON BINGHAM.

"THE GOLDEN WEB" was produced at the Lyric on March 11th. so much has no doubt been said about the production already that it is unnecessary to refer to the scheme of the plot and its similarity to that of Mr. Walter Besant's "Chaplain of the Fleet." The book—apart from the plot—is the worst part of the opera—pointless, humourless, and ill-constructed. Whether the delightful music that Mr. Goring Thomas wedded to it will carry it safely onwards on the flood-tide of success is to be doubted. That it should do so, will be the desire of every one who can admire clever, bright melody, light, flowing, and exhilarating; a work without a dull moment from beginning to end. To take it "piece-meal," needs only to make reference to the animated opening chorus, the charmingly orchestrated solo for tenor, "Fly, summer, fly"; a soprano song, "In vain I search," and a delightful solo for contralto, "I knew a love-song long ago," rendered so admirably by Madame Amadi. Then, in the second act, there are a most melodious duet for tenor and soprano, and a song for the baritone, "The Golden Web," well sung by Mr. Wallace Brownlow. A bright and taking chorus is that which opens the third act, and the gem of the opera is the soprano song following, "This love is like a naughty child," gracefully conceived and delicately scored. Every bar of the work is of interest, both to the musician and the listener unmusical. Mr. Brownlow is well-fitted with his part of Doctor Manacle, and his voice has much improved; but Mr. T. A. Shale is painfully stiff as Sir Geoffrey, and while he sings like a lover, he makes love like an automaton. Madame Amadi is, as she always is, excellent. Miss Alice Esty will be better when she has overcome certain provincial mannerisms that mar her style. Her voice is distinctly good, well-trained, and of pleasant quality; but she should try and rid herself of a too-evident self-consciousness. Her singing of the song, "This love is like a naughty child," was extremely meritorious, but utterly spoilt by the high note with which she concluded, which was both inartistic and unnecessary. The remainder of the cast, including as it does, Mr. Richard Temple, Mr. Furneaux Cook, and Mr. Arthur Wilkinson, is excellent, and Mr. Herbert Bunning conducts skilfully a most capable orchestra. It now only remains to be seen if "music without low comedy" will draw audiences to a professedly comic opera theatre. It is an experiment worth trying, no doubt; all such experiments are. If music and mounting can make a success, it will make one of "The Golden Web," for Mr. Horace Sedger.

THE Forty-Second Concert of the Bach Choir on March 10th drew a fairly large audience to St. James's Hall. The programme included the Trauer Ode, composed by Bach for the funeral service of Christiane Eberhardine, wife of Frederick Augustus I. of Saxony;

an orchestral suite in D, a Church Cantata, "Herr wie du Willt," all of which were performed in England for the first time. The re-introduction of the old trumpets may be regarded as a dubious experiment, from which little was to be gained. The next concert will take place at Prince's Hall, on May 16th, and will consist principally of unaccompanied choral works.

MISS WAKEFIELD'S lecture-recital on "Songs of the Four Nations" attracted an appreciative audience to Prince's Hall on March 9th, including the Marquis of Lorne and Lady Arthur Hill. The subject matter of the recital consisted of eighteen varied excerpts from a collection of old British and Irish national melodies recently compiled and collected by Mr. Harold Boulton, edited musically by Mr. Arthur Somervell, dedicated to Her Majesty, and published by Messrs. J. B. Cramer and Co. The selection ranged from "Pretty Polly" to "Scots wha' hae"; from the Highland "The Mackintosh's Lament" to "Ye Mariners of England"; and embraced representative songs of each nation, which were sung with much taste and expression by the lecturer, to the musicianly accompaniment of Mr. Arthur Somervell.

MR. EDWARD CUTLER, Q.C., who is probably better known as yet in the Courts of Law than the Halls of Song (though musical Vienna and Dresden recognise him as an accomplished writer) gave a *matinée* at Erard's Rooms on February 23rd. The programme consisted entirely of songs and pieces from the composer's own pen. Miss Florence Henderson displayed taste and finish in her rendering of several morceaux set down to her; and valuable assistance was also afforded by Miss Edith Hands, the possessor of a well-cultivated voice and a pleasing presence, Miss Thérèse Blamy, Mr. Arthur Strugnell, and Mr. Arthur Coward.

MISS HELEN HULME'S concert on February 26th at Steinway Hall was largely attended by her friends. Miss Hulme has a pleasing if as yet a somewhat untrained voice, and may be recommended to persevere, not to give concerts, but to study. Among the artistes who assisted were Mdlle. Otta Brony, whose cultivated voice was not heard to best advantage owing to Mdlle. Brony having crossed but the same morning from Paris; Mrs. Maud Panton, an agreeable soprano, that pleasantest of our tenors, Mr. Reginald Groome, and Mr. Wilfred Cunliffe. Mr. Harry Lee is an accomplished violinist, albeit with a shade too much vigour at some moments, but with much taste and execution. He shows promise of becoming a clever and a cultivated artiste. Mr. Jules Hollander played fairly well Liszt's showy but inartistic firework arrangement of the Valse from Faust.

THE last Evening Ballad Concert drew an immense audience to St. James's Hall on March 1st, a greedy audience, clamorous for encores and determined to have half-a-crown's worth of song for every shilling. Of the new songs produced, "The Raven" is a capital ballad in Mr. Molloy's best style, and should be popular. It was well sung by Mr. Norman Salmond. The other, "All for the Best," by Franco Leoni, was not suited to Miss Macintyre's voice at all; the words

were quite indistinguishable, a fact which may be pardonable on the operatic stage, but is not justifiable in a concert room. "Adieu, Marie" was only made acceptable by the rendering it received from Mr. Edward Lloyd. Miss Alice Gomez obtained a double recall for Henschel's delightful "Spinning Wheel" song. The last morning concert took place on March 8th.

MRS. EUGENE OUDIN has arranged to give, in conjunction with her husband, and Mdlle. Chaminade, a vocal and instrumental recital on May 17th; and Mr. Percy Notcutt gives his annual concert at St. James's Hall on April 23rd, with, as usual, an imposing array of popular artistes.

NEW MUSIC RECEIVED.

C. SHEARD & Co., 192, High Holborn.—"An O'd Refrain" (song), by Ernest T. de Mattos; "Bethesda" (sacred song), by Hamish MacCunn; "When Nuts are Brown," by Edmund Rogers; "The Song of the Anchor Chain," by Camille Daubert; "The Song of the Bow," by J. M. Capel; "On the Goodwins," by Pontet Piccolomini; "The Doctor," by Pontet Piccolomini; "So the Folks Say," by W. M. Hutchinson; "The Coronation" (march), by Seymour Smith; Mariatta (valse), by Aigrette; "The Andalusian" (waltz), by Josef Meissler; "Flemish Dance," by Theo. Bonheur; "Dance of the Lilliputians," by Theo. Bonheur; "Happy Lovers Yet" (minuet song), by Stocks Hammond.

JOSEPH WILLIAMS, 24, Berners Street, W.—Third Set of 12 Songs, by F. H. Cowen; a collection of four part songs—No. 9, by Christina Rossetti; "Andante," in F, for organ, by Frank Swinford. A collection of four part songs—No. 10, "Three Seasons," by Christina Rossetti.

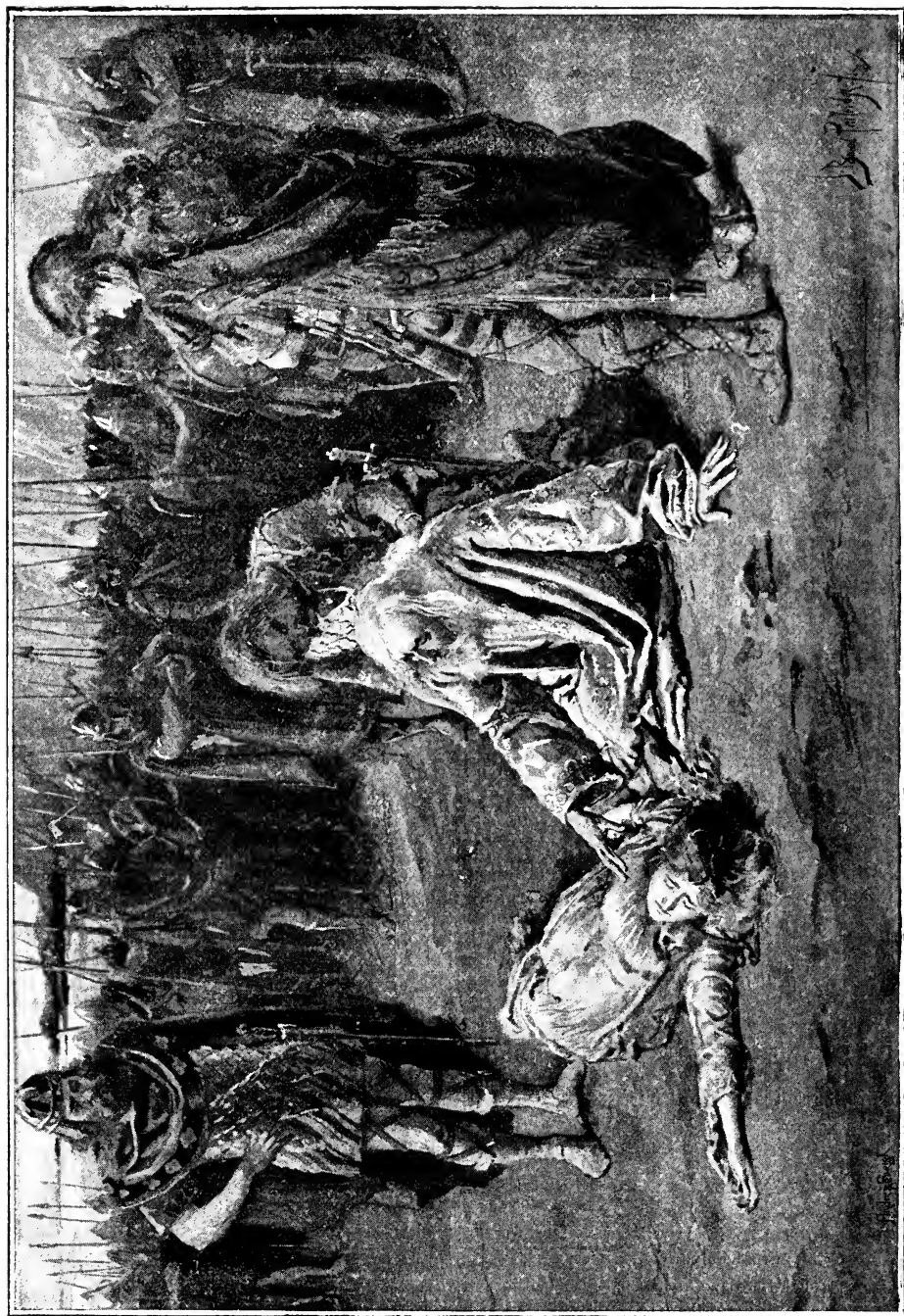
J. B. CRAMER & Co.—Songs: "At the Twilight Hour," by G. F. Horan; "Your Gift to Me," by Henry Parker; "Marie," by Frank L. Moir; "The Sailor's Home," Godfrey Marks. Dance Music: "May Blossoms," waltz, by Dudley Roy; "Society Craze," Aigrette's new Barn Dance; "Chloris," waltz, Enos Andrew.

MESSRS. CHAPPELL & Co.—"Your Heart" (song), by Ivan Carlyll; "The Gay Trooper," by Louis Diehl; "On Lida Waters," by F. Paolo Tosti; "My Dreams," by F. Paolo Tosti. The above are four songs suitable for the drawing-room.





CORDELIA AND LEAR—THE RECONCILIATION.



DEATH OF CORDELIA.

Reproduced, by permission of Mr. Henry Irving, from the *Lycium Souvenir of "King Lear."*

Notes of the Month.

"THE STRIKE AT ARLINGFORD" may not have sent Mr. George R. Sims in tears to school again, nor impelled Mr. "Spectator" to look anxiously over Waterloo Bridge on emerging from the Opera Comique "to see if the Thames were on fire," but indirectly it has been of service to the world dramatic. It has furnished, indeed, no less a thing than a very important and highly instructive contribution to the question of the Ethics of Criticism.

In the *World* newspaper of March 1st, there appeared over the familiar initials "W. A.," an article upon Mr. Moore's drama which deserves, we think, wider notice than it has received. It is not a part of our duty to stand between an actor and his critic. Every man is entitled to his opinion, entitled moreover to express it—provided he is guilty of no injustice in doing so. But in this instance the opinion expressed savours of injustice so flagrant and rank, and further appears to us based upon so dangerous, so revolutionary a principle, that we make no apology for devoting some space to the subject, and traversing the merciless sentence pronounced by the severely judicial critic in question.

THAT portion of the article with which we are concerned reads as follows:—

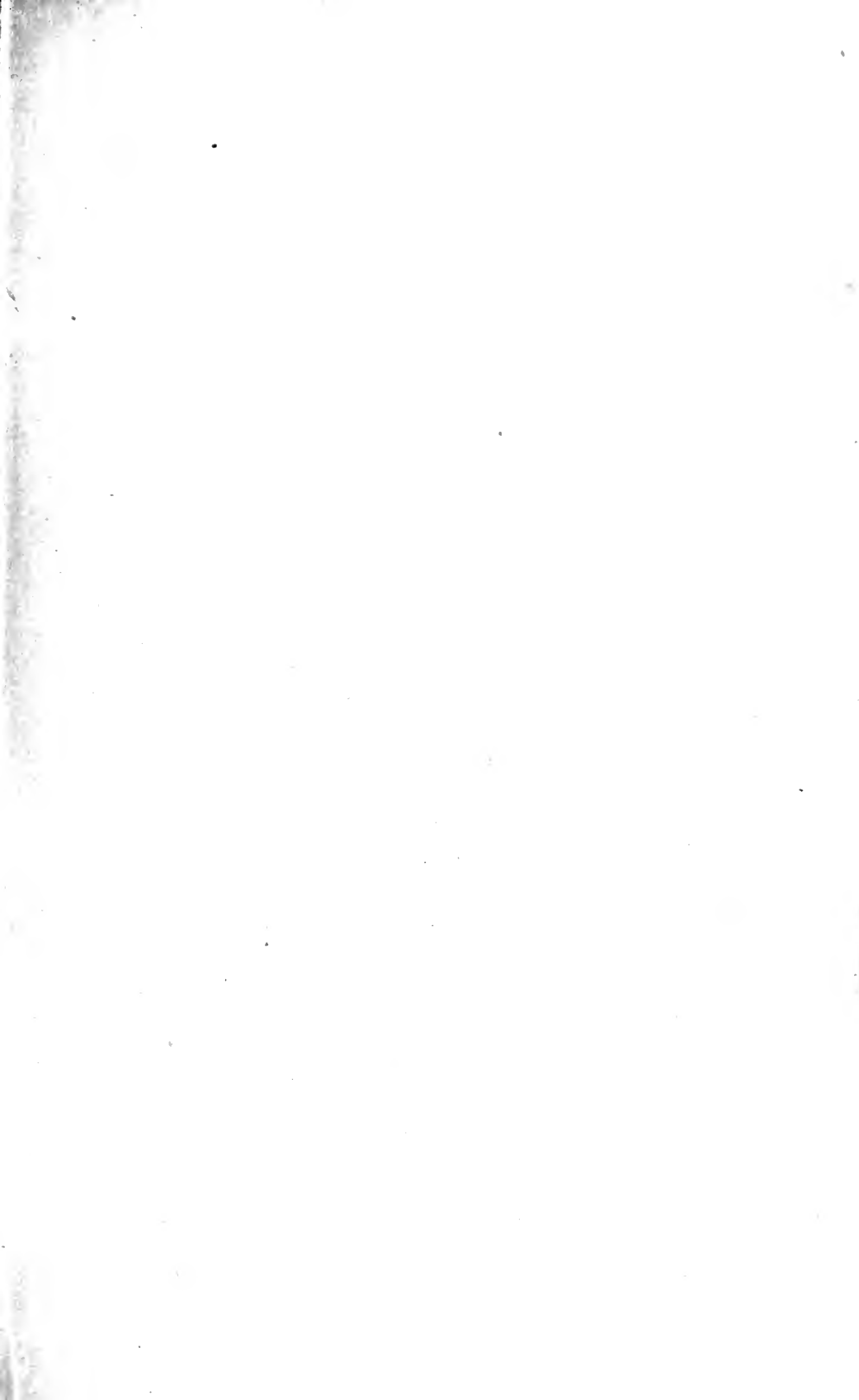
"I propose to speak my mind with great, I may almost say with unusual, frankness because it seems to me that the majority of my colleagues have most unjustly apportioned, as between author and actors, the responsibility for the comparative failure of the first night. "The Strike at Arlingford" is, to my thinking, a play with an excellent motive, worked out with an occasional uncertainty of touch, but on the whole very ably—and ruined, defaced, massacred by the most unfortunate acting conceivable. I hasten to make an exception in favour of Mr. Charles Fulton, who, admirably made up, played like the intelligent, capable actor he always is. Miss Elsie Chester, too, showed some ability, but was physically unsuited to the character assigned her. The main fault lay with Mr. Bernard Gould and Miss Florence West. Miss West lacked subtlety, seductiveness, distinction; Mr. Gould lacked—well, except a romantic, Vandyke-like head and face, he lacked everything, everything. Even that romantic head he could not hold erect, but kept it bent throughout in a curiously shamefaced fashion, while he rolled rather than walked about the stage, the picture of helpless indecision. If Mr. Gould is ever to do justice to his talent, he *must* correct that terrible wallowing gait of his, which makes his shoulders describe a quite appreciable arc of a circle at every step he takes. This is a defect which must surely be corrigible by a little drill or training. If not, it will fatally handicap Mr. Gould in his stage career. But it is not his carriage alone that is at fault in this part. He is throughout lacking in energy and decision of touch. He speaks in a low, monotonous, embarrassed voice, and produces a depressing effect of absent-mindedness, of being lost in a brown study. If John Reid had been an opium-eater, there would have been some justification for Mr. Gould's rendering of the part. He will no doubt urge that Reid is essentially an undecided character—that that is where the tragedy comes in. But a man may be undecided without being utterly flaccid. Hamlet, for instance, suffers from indecision, but what actor ever succeeded in the part by dint of mere woolliness

John Reid, moreover, is a poet and a mob-orator; such a man, however vacillating at heart, must be able at times to put on an outward show of fervour, of conviction, and must at least have at his command a certain superficial knack of rhetorical emphasis. Nothing of the sort is to be discovered in Mr. Gould's John Reid. He a leader of men! He face, and master, and cow a mob! Why, he has about as much magnetism as a bashful curate; or, to express it in Hilda Wangel's phrase, there is no more of "the troll" in him than in our excellent A. B. W., in whom, by his own reiterated confession, or rather boast, there resides "not a ha'p'orth" of the quality so symbolised. Mr. Moore has given him several—perhaps too many—opportunities for rhetorical effect; but not one of them did Mr. Gould seize upon. Nothing more pointless can be imagined than his delivery of such phrases as "The vastitude of the starry skies, the mystery of the sleeping city," or "Garrets where want lurks alwayr, and famine is a frequent visitor." I do not quote these as admirable examples of dramatic style; but if they are to be spoken at all, in heaven's name let them be spoken effectively. And if Mr. Gould had no eloquence, he had less than no passion. He showed not a trace of the erotic self-abandonment on which depended the whole effect of the last act. John Reid was still the mild, puzzle-headed, well meaning creature he had been from the first. His love for Lady Anne was, to all appearance, as lukewarm as his love for Ellen Sands. No wonder her ladyship thought the financier a better bargain than the poet. It is with very sincere regret that I write in such terms of an earnest young actor, who has many valuable qualifications for his art—of a man, moreover, whose work in another sphere we all admire and are grateful for. I have no doubt, too, that Mr. Gould was hampered on the night of the first performance by natural and temporary nervousness. No one would have been more willing than I to make allowance for Mr. Gould, if other critics, recognising the inadequacy of his performance, had on that ground made allowance for Mr. Moore. But the assertion that the play was bad and the acting good is too monstrous a perversion of the truth to be allowed to pass without emphatic protest."

Now it would be easy enough to join issue with "W. A." upon many counts of this terrible indictment. It might be pointed out that, because in this critic's judgment a shame-faced bending of a romantic head and a terrible wallowing gait detracted from the heroic aspect of John Reid, it by no means follows that the audience thought the same. (From the lack of public support given to a similar impeachment of like defects in one Mr. Irving, by one Mr. William Archer, it might almost be inferred, indeed, that "W. A." in this particular might stand alone.) And it might not be out of place in this connection to remind the critic that unless he is quite sure of his ground, he is overstepping his privileges in attributing to the house the dissatisfaction he himself experiences at some personal quality in the actor, and throwing upon that any fraction of responsibility for the failure of a play.

FURTHER, it might with all respect be hinted that perhaps Mr. Gould's conception of John Reid is the only possible one, and that "W. A.'s" objections to it arise primarily from ignorance of the play. There are certainly grounds for such a view. Mr. Gould it should be remembered had rehearsed the part for several weeks, and is known to us all as one of the very few "heroic" actors gifted with brains, with imagination to pierce to an author's meaning, and mimetic power to give his conception fitting shape. Whereas "W. A.," until he has had an opportunity of becoming more familiar with the play, by his own confession "can form but an imperfect and provisional estimate of its merits and defects."

MOREOVER, we might hazard the belief that a fuller knowledge of the work would convince "W. A." that indecision, lack of fervour, infinitesimal magnetism, and even utter flaccidity, are only to be





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MISS MAY PALFREY.

"For we that live to please must please to live."

—JOHNSON.

expected of a man who is throughout the drama suffering either from physical exhaustion or extreme nervous prostration ! and that even supposing the author has provided him with sentiments of the kind (which our memory does not allow us to admit) "erotic self-abandonment" and "passion" are hardly consistent with a "flaccid" condition of this nature !

THEN we might with justice enquire where on earth is the "opportunity for rhetorical effect" in such phrases as "The vastitude of the starry skies, the mystery of the sleeping city," or "Garrets where want lurks always, and famine is a frequent visitor !" where indeed is any in the whole play, after the deputation scene in the first act, which even "W. A." must surely admit was carried by Mr. Gould with "energy," "decision," "an outward show of fervour," and "a certain superficial knack of rhetorical emphasis" befitting "a leader of men."

IN short we might, but we will not, urge that "W. A." is really concerned, though doubtless in perfect innocence, to claim for Mr. Moore's hero all sorts of heroic qualities with which Mr. Moore has not endowed him, and to blame the luckless actor for failing to invest the character with physical and mental attributes utterly foreign to it, and that his interesting article is in sum nothing but a clever piece of special pleading ! But, leaving all this unaccentuated, we will raise one objection only.

WHAT justification, we ask, has any critic for seeking to neutralise the effect of his brother critics' severely adverse judgment on a play, by proportionate railing against the play's chief interpreter ? For observe what "W. A." says : "*No one would have been more willing than I to make allowance for Mr. Gould, if other critics, recognising the inadequacy of his performance, had on that ground made allowance for Mr. Moore.*" In other words, "Because Mr. Moore's play seems to me a good deal better than my fellow-critics think it, I am justified in going out of my way to emphasise every deficiency, substantial or shadowy, imagined or observed, in the leading player's physique, method, bearing, and conception, and in doing it at such length, and in such wise, that what previously appeared black will look white, and *vice-versa*, and the balance of critical opinion will be restored, and a goodly number of people will bear away the impression that a faulty leading man damned a worthy play !"

WHAT do our actor-readers think of this novel doctrine ?

MISS MAY LEVER PALFREY (the subject of our first portrait this month) is the youngest daughter of the late Dr. James Palfrey, of Brook Street, W. Her natural aptitude and proclivity for the stage was such that upon her being introduced by the late Sir Morell Mackenzie to Sir Augustus Harris, the latter gave her a small part at once in his forthcoming pantomime at Drury Lane (Christmas, 1890). Miss Palfrey remained at that theatre for a year-and-a-half, playing a number of small parts, and understudying more considerable ones, and left it to take the part of

a fairy robin in "The Pantomime Rehearsal" at the Shaftesbury. When the piece was transferred to the Court, to form a part of the successful "triple bill" there, she also took the part of Parker in Mr. Weedon Grossmith's little play, "A Commission"; and when Mr. Gilbert's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern" was revived, that of the Player Queen. Last summer (1892), during Miss Ellaline Terriss's absence, Miss Palfrey took the part of Grace in Mr. Stephenson's "Faithful James" for a period of several weeks. During the run of "The Guardsman," Miss Palfrey understudied the parts taken by Miss Terriss and Miss Ellissen. Having gained experience and confidence as an actress, Miss Palfrey made a new essay in the recent revival of "The Pantomime Rehearsal," when she performed the Serpentine Dance. Her most recent part was that of Jessie in "Over the Way," in which she followed Miss Terriss.

MR. W. G. ELLIOT (the subject of our second portrait) made his first appearance professionally at the Haymarket Theatre in 1882 in a small part in "Odette," and remained in Mr. Bancroft's company there for three years, playing a large variety of less important parts in the succession of high-class comedies which were presented there. At the conclusion of the Bancroft's management at the Haymarket, Mr. Elliot, after appearing in the part of Touchstone in "As You Like It," and the Satyr in "The Faithful Shepherdess," performed in the open air at Combe Park in 1885, went to America with Miss Rosina Vokes' company, where his most important parts were that of Jack Deedes in "The Pantomime Rehearsal" and Eccles in "Caste." In 1891 he joined Mr. Edward Terry's Company, and appeared as Montague Trimble in "The Times," migrating to the Court Theatre, where he is now playing. He has sustained there the rôles of Captain Champion ("The New Sub"), Rosencrantz ("Rosencrantz and Guildenstern"), Sir Charles Jenks ("Marriage"), Sir Eustace Bramston ("The Guardsman"), Mr. Chirrup ("Over the Way"), and is now appearing as the Count de Grival in Mr. Pinero's "farcical romance," "The Amazons."





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MR. G. W. ELLIOT.

"Away, then! work with boldness and with speed."
—MARLOWE.

New Plays

PRODUCED AND IMPORTANT REVIVALS in London, from February 21st, 1893 to March 13th, 1893 :—

(*Revivals are marked thus °*)

- Feb. 21 "The Strike at Arlingford," play, in three acts, by George Moore. Opera Comique.
- „ 22° "Our Boys," comedy, in three acts, by the late H. J. Byron. Vaudeville.
- March 2° "The Ironmaster," English version, in four acts, of George Ohnet's "Le Maître de Forges," by A. W. Pinero. Avenue.
- „ 4 "Griffith Murdoch," play, in four acts, by Montagu H. Spier. (Produced by amateurs). St. George's Hall.
- „ 4 "Alexandra," play, in four acts, adapted from the German of Richard Voss. (Adapter unannounced.) Royalty.
- „ 6° "The Lights of Home," drama, in five acts, by Geo. R. Sims and Robert Buchanan. Pavilion.
- „ 6 "The Master Builder," play, in three acts, translated from the Norse of Henrik Ibsen, by William Archer and Edmund Gosse. (Transferred from the Trafalgar Square, and placed in the evening bill at Vaudeville).
- „ 6 "The Fay o' the Fern," fantastic farce, in two acts, by R. G. Legge. (First time in London). *Matinée*. Comedy.
- „ 6 "Corney Courted," operetta, in one act, adapted from Dickens' novel, "Oliver Twist," by Arthur Waugh, composed by Claude Nugent. *Matinée*. Comedy.
- „ 6 "The Isle of Utopia," "fancy," in one act, by George St. Cloud, music by Claude Nugent. *Matinée*. Comedy.
- „ 7 "The Amazons," farcical romance, in three acts, by A. W. Pinero. Court.
- „ 8 "A Fair Equestrienne," "musical trifle," in one act, by Haslingden Russell. First time in London. Trafalgar Square.
- „ 11 "The Golden Web," comedy-opera, in three acts, by F. Corder and B. C. Stephenson, composed by the late Goring Thomas. Lyric.
- „ 12° "A Doll's House," play, in three acts, translated from the Norse of Henrik Ibsen, by William Archer. Royalty.
- „ 13 "Our Play," comedietta, in one act, by R. G. Graham. Vaudeville.
- „ 13° "Blue-eyed Susan," comic opera, libretto by Geo. R. Sims and Henry Pettitt, music by F. Osman Carr. Grand.
- „ 13 "The Ballad Singer," three-act musical play, by Tom Craven. Elephant and Castle.

In the Provinces, from February 21st to March 21st, 1893 :—

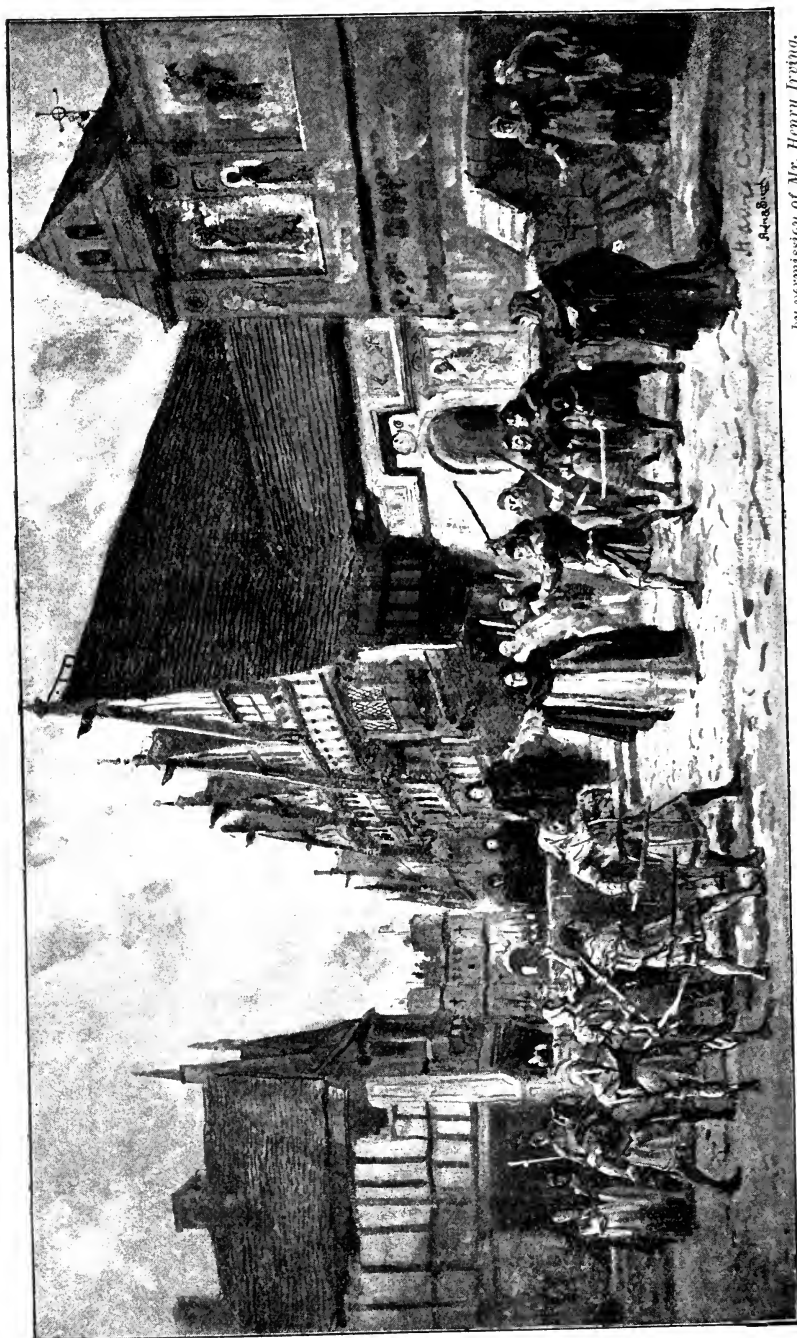
- Feb. 22 "The Inkslinger," comedy-drama, in one act, adapted for the stage from a story of Max Adeler, by Charles Whitlock and E. T. de Banzie. Royalty, Glasgow.
- „ 27 "Far England," drama, in five acts, by Sutton Vane. Queen's, Manchester.
- March 8 "The Shadow Hand," drama, in four acts, by Cyril Austen-Lee. (For copyright purposes). Alexandra, Widnes.
- „ 9 "Dinner for Two," comedietta, in one act, by R. C. Carton. T.R., Brighton.
- „ 9 "The Love King," drama, in four acts, by Gilbert Elliott. Royal County, Reading.
- „ 14 "Breaking the News," a comedietta, in one act, by A. M. Heathcote. Brompton Hospital.

- March 15 "French Law," a comedietta, in one act, by Paul Barry. Athenæum, Tottenham Court Road.
- " 17 "The Mystic Ring," burlesque, in one act, by E. C. Johnston. Pavilion, Birkenhead.
- " 17 "Ragged Robin," one-act play, by F. Bowyer and W. F. Sprange. Prince of Wales, Southampton.
- " 21 "The New World ; or, Under the Southern Cross," a play, by Forbes Dawson. Royal, Bath.

In Paris, from February 16th to March 11th, 1893.

- Feb. 18 "Pêcheur d'Islande," piece, in four acts, by Pierre Loti and Louis Tiercelin, music by Guy Ropartz. Eden.
- " 28 "Le Flipote," comedy, in three acts, by Jules Lemaitre. Vaudeville.
- " 24 "La Maladetta," ballet, in two acts, arranged by M. Hansen, music by Paul Vidal. Opéra.
- March 6 "La Paix du Ménage," comedy, in two acts by Guy de Maupassant. Français.
- " 10 "La Mere la Victoire," drama, in five acts, by MM. Gaston Marot and Louie Péricand. Chateau d'Eau.
- " 11 "Une Page d'Amour," dramatic version, in five acts, of Emile Zola's novel of the same name, by Charles Samson. Odéon.





Reproduced from the Lyceum Souvenir,

STREET IN NORTHAMPTON.
(ACT I, SC. II, FROM "BECKET.")

by permission of Mr. Henry Irving.

THE THEATRE.

MAY, 1893.

Stars of the Stage.

NO. I.—MR. WILLIAM TERRISS.



ONE of the beauty spots of the West of England is the little seaside resort of Weston-super-Mare. Twenty-five years ago it was beginning to acquire the reputation which the inhabitants felt it deserved. To its fine, shelving beach the social tide of the west was setting, and the visit of a prince of the blood royal was only needed to establish its fortunes and its fame.

One fine March morning the little town was agog with excitement. The unexpected had happened at last. A prince of royal blood was on his way to the rising resort. Prince Alfred, then a charming boy of 17 years, had been observed to leave Paddington *incognito* on his way to Weston-super-Mare. The news spread like a prairie fire. The lifeless streets bustled into activity, banners flew out of windows and swung in the breeze, groups assembled at street corners to discuss the coming glory. Shortly before two o'clock the London mail steamed into the station, and out of a saloon carriage stepped a curly-headed youth, dressed in a midshipman's uniform, and an elderly gentleman who watched over the boy with filial tenderness. Outside the station a crowd had gathered, and when the couple wended their way to the Bath Hotel the air was rent with cheers. At the hotel a deputation in terms of respectful homage welcomed them to the town. The elderly visitor stoutly denied that the boy who accompanied him belonged to the exalted station which the deputation assigned him. The Weston people knew who they were, and would not be denied the luxury of a royal visit. The Church bells were set ringing, the crowd around the hotel grew larger and larger, and when the pair emerged for a blow on the promenade they were greeted with lusty shouts of welcome. Returning to the hotel an ultra-patriotic chemist pushed through the crowd, and presented the boy with a bottle of scent, as a small mark

of esteem, accompanying the gift with an epistle complimenting him on his illustrious descent.

The effusive loyalty of the people was too much for the visitors. They determined secretly to leave the town next morning. Port-manteaux were packed, hotel charges paid, and preparations made for a quick and quiet exit. Their determination, however, leaked out, and when the prince and his equerry emerged from the hotel they beheld a sight which astonished them. Prancing at the foot of the hotel steps were four spanking greys with scarlet-coated postillions, harnessed to a truly regal carriage. Into this the visitors were invited by the spirited proprietor, and away they drove to the station amid the shouts of the people.

That boy was William Terriss. That was the first time he played a royal part. He has played many a royal part since that eventful day. And as we sat in his cosy room at Bedford Park, the well-known actor laughed heartily at the recollection of the incident. The feathered songsters which his daughter lovingly tends paused in their songs to listen to King Henry's ringing laugh.

"You gave Weston a wide berth after that?" I remarked when the laughter had subsided.

"Yes," he replied, "but such is the whirligig of time that last year, when touring in the provinces with that charming actress, Miss Millward, I found myself again at Weston-super-Mare. More than twenty years had elapsed since I made my triumphal entry. I felt a great curiosity to know whether any of the inhabitants remembered the incident, but for a long time I could not discover any that did. At last I found a man named Johnson, a retired boot and shoe maker, who recollected the affair perfectly well. We spent a jolly night together and, over a bottle of wine and a fragrant weed, lived again that well-remembered day. At midnight we shook hands never perhaps to meet again."

There was a ring of pathos in his voice as he leaned back in his chair and opened a book which lay on his knee. It was a big, roughly bound book, but the actor treasures it more than the first folio of Shakespeare. For it enshrines his whole life—a life of marvellous diversity and adventure. Few men have had such a varied career as Mr. Irving's right hand man. You look at his pleasant, handsome face, on which time has scarcely traced a finger, and you find no indications of his stern fights with fortune. You cannot understand how this sturdy, broad-shouldered, youthful-looking actor once raised horses in Kentucky, planted tea in India, and grew wool in South America at the bidding of the fickle Goddess, and then scattering all his dreams of commercial greatness to the winds scaled the Thespian heights until he sat serenely at the top. And yet this is what William Terriss has done. His struggles with fortune have neither seared his heart nor scarred his brow, and when beautiful Ellaline Terriss steps into the room with the dainty grace she trips the boards, and calls him "Father," or lusty Tom Terriss yells "Pater," through the window, you look from one to the other and think there must be some mistake. Surely they are brothers and sister!



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MISS ELLEN TERRY AS FAIR ROSAMUND.

But look close enough and you see threads of grey creeping through the actor's curly black locks which help to dispel the illusion. His son and daughter have the same clear profile, the same sculptured mouth, the same large eyes—the eyes of “darling, charming Molineaux” which *Punch* apostrophised when “Bill” was the idol of the Adelphi. The actor is proud and justly so, of his children. The elder, Miss Ellaline Terriss, barely out of her teens, has already gained distinction on the boards. She has all the making of a stage queen—graces of figure and speech allied to that indefinable smartness which the French call *chic*—and her future is a bright, assured one. Tom is touring in the States after a useful career at Drury Lane. He is a fine sturdy lad, a counterpart of his father. In his midshipman's uniform he looks an ideal hero of Adelphi melodrama with his big eyes and winning smile. Tom's time is yet to come, and when it does there will be many black-eyed Susans whose hearts will throb as he paces the ship of the stage.

But avast! as all sailor-actors say. To return to Mr. Terriss who is fingering the leaves of his book in an endeavour to find something which will interest me. The book is filled with portraits of actors and actresses, cuttings from newspapers, and clippings from periodicals, and in this chaos of compliment—for actors of course preserve nothing else—his eagle eye singles out a two line paragraph which reads thus :—

“Robin Hood was played in a spirited manner by Mr. William Terriss, a young actor who shows great promise.”

“There!” he exclaims, “that is what made me an actor. That was written by Clement Scott many, many years ago. I had just entered the profession, and such was the effect of those words of a youthful critic to a youthful actor that I determined to adopt a dramatic career.”

“There is a good story of how you got on the stage?” I observed.

“Yes, and it's quite true. I made up my mind to go on the stage and I thought the Bancrofts would help me. For several days I called at their house in St. John's Wood—a house opposite to the one in which I was born—but was unable to see them. One day I determined to see them, and pushed by the servant maid and walked into the dining-room. When Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft came in they were so struck by my persistence that they engaged me. As Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft say in their book my courage and coolness amused and amazed them.”

“When would be the date of your first London appearance in an important part?” I asked.

Mr. Terriss looked at his well-worn book. “Here it is,” he said, pointing to a page on which the theatrical summaries of the *Daily Telegraph* were pasted in order of their publication. “It was in 1873 as Richard Cœur de Lion, at Drury Lane, which occasion I believe was the very last appearance of that celebrated actor, James Anderson. Then there was a revival of Amy Robsart in which I played the ill-fated Earl of Leicester. This was followed



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MR. HENRY IRVING AS BECKET THE CHANCELLOR.

by Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake" and the "Shaughraun," in which Boucicault himself played. That was his last appearance in England. Chatterton was manager of Drury Lane then, and when he went over to the Adelphi in 1877, I followed him. Here is a memorable cast for you," pointing to an advertisement in which I read the names of Sam Emery, Geo. Belmore, Johnny Clark, Bill McIntyre, Mrs. Alfred Mellon, and Lydia Foote. "Ah!" he mused, "of that company I am the only living member to-day."

"Then you moved on to the Strand?"

"Yes, in the part of Doricourt in "The Belle's Strategem," which Irving subsequently played at the Lyceum. On that occasion I obtained a footing I have since held. In 1878 I played in "Olivia" at the Court with Ellen Terry as Olivia. That was my first association with the great actress.

"You were associated with the Kendals for a time?"

"Yes, in 1879, as Capt. Hawksley in "Still Waters Run Deep." After a short stay at the Haymarket, I joined hands with Mr. Henry Irving for the first time, as his chief support in "The Corsican Brothers." Arthur Matthison—a well-known *litterateur*—was alive in those days playing at Drury Lane. He bore a remarkable resemblance to Irving and he used to run across from Drury Lane and appear as the ghost of the murdered brother. It was very funny. He had just time to stalk across the boards and get back to Drury Lane in time to resume his part there."

"I have been associated with Mr. Irving almost ever since," resumed Mr. Terriss. "In the production of "Romeo and Juliet," Mr. Irving played Romeo, Miss Terry, Juliet; and I played Mercutio. The play ran for 150 nights. It was succeeded by "Much Ado About Nothing," and the celebrated production of "Othello" with Mr. Edwin Booth as Othello, and Mr. Irving as Iago. That was the first time the two great actors clasped hands, and it was the last time Booth appeared in England. There is a picture on the wall there that he gave me."

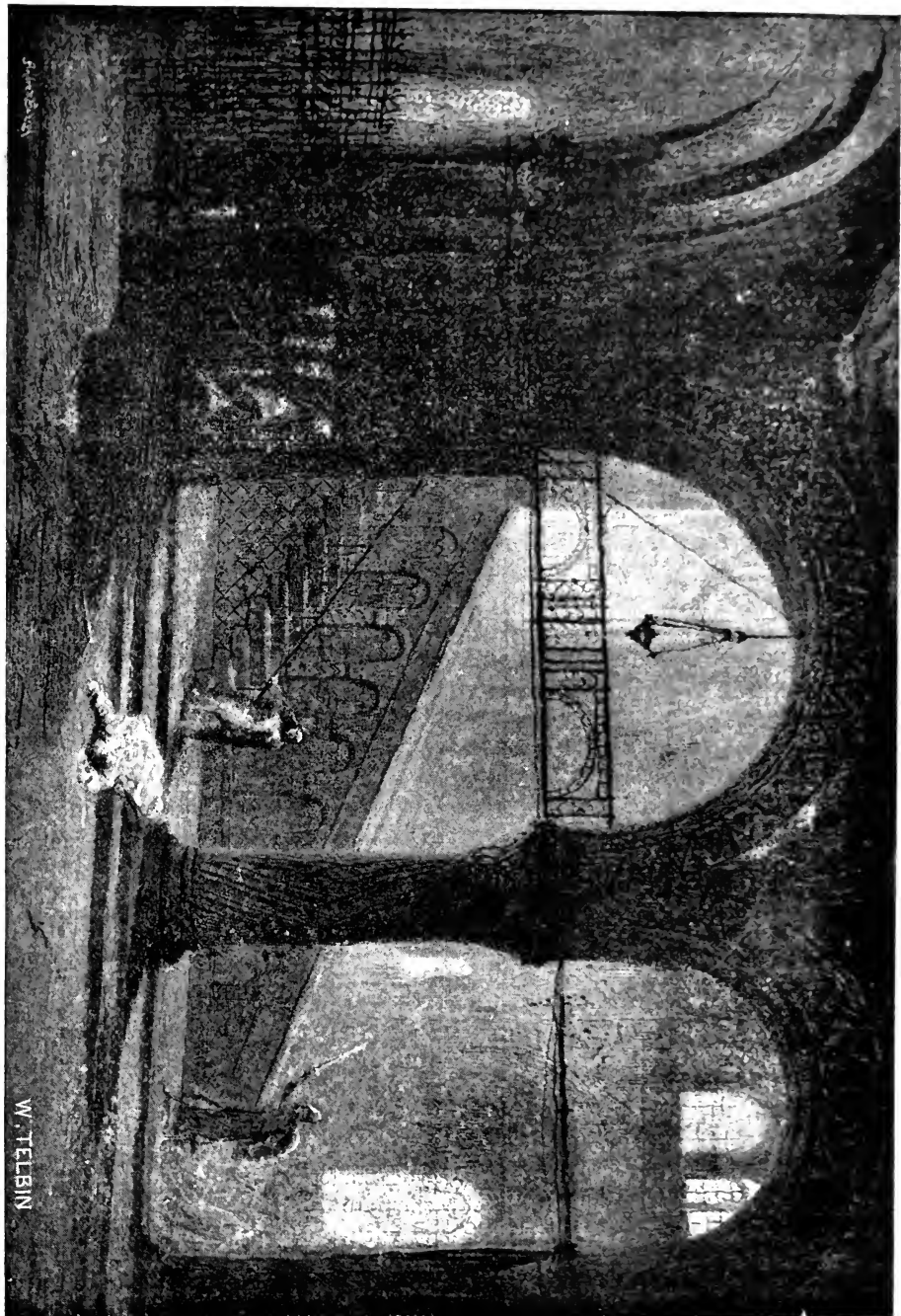
"Speaking of Booth, reminds me that you have had some interesting experiences in the land he came from?"

"Yes, but that is a long time ago. Twenty years ago one used to hear a good deal about America. It was a veritable land of promise, flowing with milk and honey. I was so struck by the stories of its wondrous wealth and possibilities that I determined to go out there. I settled down, with one of the Tattersalls (a nephew of the great Tattersall) at Lexington, in Kentucky, and commenced horse-rearing. It was rare sport while the money lasted, but my patrimony soon dwindled away, and starvation stared me in the face. I was in desperate straits, I can tell you. I belonged to a Masonic Lodge there of which the worshipful master was a coachbuilder named Oliver. I went to this man and explained my position, telling him that I hadn't even money to cable home for supplies. He was a fine generous-hearted fellow—a man I shall never forget. He put his hand in his pocket and gave me 150 dollars. His kindness pretty

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CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.—THE DEATH OF BECKET.

by permission of Mr. Henry Irving.



well overpowered me. I took the train for New York with my wife and daughter—Ellaline was a baby then—and her black nurse. There we took steerage passage to England. When we landed at Southampton I hadn't a shilling in my pocket."

The actor hesitated for a moment and then went on, "But the sequel is more interesting. Ten years afterwards I found myself the leading man at the Lyceum, and advantageous offers took Mr. Irving and his company to America. We toured the States with success. In the winter of 1882, finding myself at Cincinnati, I had an indescribable longing to go to Lexington, 200 miles away to see my old friend Oliver, and thank him for his great kindness to me. I determined to go there at all costs. I got up early one morning and took the train for Lexington. It was a great risk, because I was not sure that I could get on to St. Louis in time for the next performance. Towards the end of the winter's day I got out at Lexington, and walked down the well-remembered street to the old coach-builder's shop which Mr. Oliver kept. I was surprised to see the place shut up, and knocking, a lady came to the door dressed in the deepest mourning.

I said, "Is Mr. Oliver in, please?"

She looked at me for a moment, and I saw the tears spring into her eyes. Before I could say anything more she said in a wailing voice—

"No, he died three days ago."

A painful silence ensued. After expressing my grief, I told her my name was William Terriss, the man whom her husband so kindly helped ten years ago, and that I had come 200 miles purposely to thank him.

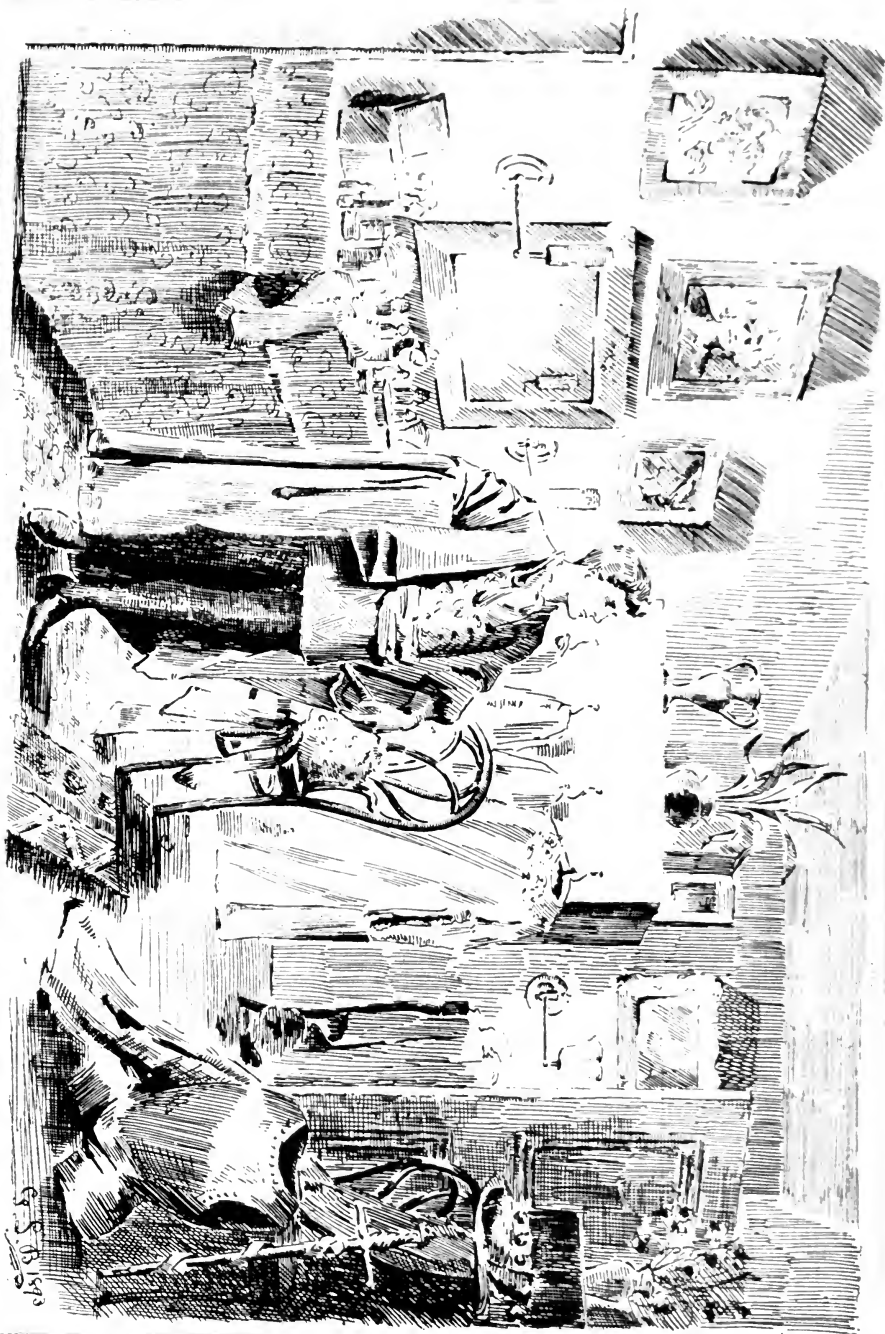
"This was too much for the dear old soul. She recognised me in an instant, fell on my neck and wept like a child. Her husband had been buried that day."

"We had a long chat together about him, and I was so struck with the sadness of the event that I pretty well forgot all about my St. Louis engagement. When I did remember it I rushed to the station just in time to see the train steaming-out of it. There was no William Terriss in the play the next night."

"It was during Mr. Irving's second visit to America that Mary Anderson occupied the theatre I think?"

"Yes, and I played Romeo to Miss Anderson's Juliet. That play had a remarkable run of 200 nights, during which Royalty visited us four times. I had a little experience during that run which taught me to beware of stage weapons. I was once playing Romeo to the Juliet of the late Adelaide Neilson at the Haymarket, when I equipped myself with a dagger, sharp as a razor. At one of the dress rehearsals Miss Neilson noticed this weapon and earnestly entreated me to substitute a blunted weapon for it. I did so and thanked her for her suggestion. During the Lyceum run of "Romeo and Juliet" I forgot her wise counsel, and the result was that I fell on my own dagger, which was so sharp that it pierced me in the side. Since then I have taken the lesson to heart.

AT THE LYCEUM : THE DUC DE NEMOURS (MR. TERRIS) IN HIS DRESSING-ROOM, APRIL 8TH, 1893.



"It was after my association with Miss Anderson that I struck out into melodrama at the Adelphi in that most successful play of modern times, "The Harbour Lights." I became a favourite with the Adelphi playgoers, and this fact induced me to appear in a series of melodramas there—"The Bells of Haslemere," "Union Jack," "Silver Falls," etc., in all of which I was ably supported by that charming actress, Miss Jessie Millward. Leaving the Adelphi I went on a second American tour, and returning to London in 1890 produced at Drury Lane a new and original play, "Paul Kauvar." Subsequently I rejoined Mr. Irving, supporting him once more as his leading man in "Ravenswood," afterwards as King Henry VIII. in the sumptuous revival of the play of that name, and now as Henry II, in that very successful play, "Becket," by the late Lord Tennyson, lately produced at Windsor before Her Majesty the Queen. Such has been my theatrical career up to the present day."

"And your association with Mr. Irving is likely to continue," I remarked.

"Yes, he is a splendid fellow to work with. It is astonishing how earnest he is on the boards. I never knew a man who fights so well on the stage. We were playing together in "Macbeth" at Glasgow on one occasion, when we had a terrific fight together. Irving fought me so desperately that he cut through my guard and hit me a furious blow on the head from which blood flowed rather freely. When we got to the wings I said :

"That was a smart crack on the head you gave me." He looked at me for a moment, half laughing, put his hand on my head and said :

"Never mind, it won't hurt you, dear boy. Your head *is* rather hard."

We bent over the old scrap book once more, redolent with reminiscences of a varied career, and as he turned over the pages he told me how he went out in 1866 to India to join his brother, Col. Lewin at tea-planting, how he was wrecked off the Hooghly mouth; how he came to England in 1868, and made his first appearance on the stage at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, Birmingham, then a lad of 17; how he next became fired with a zeal for farming, and went off to the Falkland Islands in the Southern Pacific; how, becoming tired of raising wool, he returned to England for six months, and then went off to Kentucky. What a strange flirtation with fortune was recorded in that unpretentious book, and what a favourite of the goddess he must have been, for despite all her coquetry she finally lifted him to the summit of success.

We were about to pass by a reference to Madame Patti and her beautiful theatre at Craig-y-Nos, when the actor smiled a smile which told me that a funny experience had been conjured up. I asked him what it meant, what diverting comedy had mingled with his tragic experiences?

"Oh, I had an amusing time at Madame Patti's magnificent castle.

I went down there in 1890 to speak the opening lines when Madame's theatre was ready. We were talking behind the scenes when she asked me to get up an impromptu drama. I said it would be rather difficult to arrange the matter as the audience had already assembled, but eventually we decided to perform an impromptu which we called 'The Bandit and his Bride.'"

"Madame Patti was delighted at the opportunity of a little fun, and entered into the project with great enthusiasm. To the amazement of the audience I stepped in front and announced that a new and original one act, unrehearsed drama would be performed, for which I asked their indulgence. Mr. Edward, now Sir Edward, Lawson was there and we appointed him stage-manager for the occasion. Sir Edward smilingly consented, regarding the affair as a huge joke—as indeed it was. I rushed to the wings, turned my dress coat inside out, pulled my socks over my trousers, put a dirty scene-shifter's cap on my head, and with a property gun in one hand, and an oar in the other, stepped gloomily on to the stage."

"A soliloquy followed. In tragic tones I related how I had wooed and won the village maiden when a fairer and richer suitor came on the scene. But I refuse to yield her. She has promised to meet me in the Fairy Glen at the sound of vespers. (Aside 'Vespers Sir Edward.' Sir Edward hits a gong with all his might and makes a sound like an invitation to dinner rather than to prayer. Smothered laughter in front—and behind. Sir Edward doubled up.) I have sworn never to release her, to dash her body over the precipice rather than to see her the wife of another. (Enter Madame Patti in a boat, singing divinely.) I ask her to fly with me to some far off land—she spurns me—rushes to the boat. I jump into the cockle shell, drag her back on the stage and swear she shall be mine. Carried away by the excitement of the scene, I grasp her so fiercely that she gasps for breath. 'For God's sake,' she says, 'you'll kill me.' 'Kill you,' I shout grasping her still more fiercely, 'Yes, I'll kill you, false one; we'll die together,' and amid breathless excitement, I bear her to the precipice and disappear as the curtain rings down amid tremendous applause. 'A call,' I shouted to Sir Edward, 'Ring up.' It was too late. Sir Edward was so convulsed with laughter that he hadn't strength even to pull the signal."

"A smart bit of impromptu work," I observe as Mr. Terriss leans back in his chair and laughs again at the recollection of it.

"Yes, such plays have their useful as well as their comical side. A timely impromptu is often very helpful when there is an awkward situation on the stage. For instance I was once playing in "Ravenswood" at Birmingham, in which play of course, I have to fight with, and be killed by Edgar and fall lifeless on the stage. One night the front cloth wouldn't come down, and Mr. Irving when he had killed me, knelt down and whispered, "Get off somehow, there's a hitch." Well, I hardly knew what to do for a moment. Then I sighed, and the audience saw the unexampled spectacle of a dead man returning to life. I sat up, put my hand to my heart and gasped, "I have a

pain in my heart, I shall die yet," and with those words I staggered off the stage to the amazement of the audience."

We talked a little longer, and then strolled over the actor's home. It is the home of the actor and the artist. Brightness and beauty are everywhere. There is nothing showy, for people who know William Terriss know that he has an intense dislike of anything showy or fashionable. For the dainty fripperies of finikin manhood he has an undisguised contempt. His home is the reflex of his strong, honest individuality. His life—to use a rhetorical phrase—is a magnificent antithesis. He lives a life of peasant-like simplicity by day, a life of glittering, regal splendour by night. In the morning he strolls over Bedford Park in a tweed suit and soft grey hat, in the evening he walks with kingly step across the Lyceum stage in shimmering silks and gold brocade—a perfect replica of the monarch whose patronage hurried Becket to his doom.

HARTLEY ASPDEN.



Strangers, Nevermore !



IN sunny days, now passed away
 We wandered, hand in hand
 And heart in heart, a joyous pair
 Through all the happy land.
 From out the space of years we met,
 Two souls, unknown before,
 But now, entwined by cords of love,
 And strangers, nevermore !

And yet our life has darkened o'er
 Our hands are thrust apart,
 How can I sing my songs of joy
 With such an aching heart.
 For, oh ! the surging thoughts roll on
 And swell into a sea
 Whose waves of longing, grief and love
 Come sweeping over me.

Life is a book, wherein each page
 Of strange, mysterious lore
 Contains the life-throbs of a soul
 Which liveth evermore.
 For, what is written, cannot change,
 But there, for good or ill,
 The record, writ in words of fire,
 Remains a record still.

So, through the silence of my soul
 As she lies spent with woe,
 The surging thoughts, both wild and sweet,
 Like night birds, come and go.
 They waken from her sleepless trance
 My spirit's fainting powers,
 They sting her into life and pain
 Through all the darkening hours.

Oh, Love, to think that in our book
 This tender secret lies,
 This record fraught with love and pain,
 With smiles, and tears, and sighs !
 Yet, this we know, whate'er befall,
 Since once our souls have met,
 Through life—through all its length of days—
 We never can forget.

M. C. ACRAMAN.



A Cry in the Wilderness.



HE critic, like the poor, we have always with us. "When Britain first, etc., arose from out the Azure Main, it may be safely assumed that a competent critic watched the performance and forthwith pronounced a decided opinion. He no doubt declared that the upward motion was crude and immature, and that the azure of the main was unconvincing. And again, for the type is constant, how he must have shrieked when woad "went out" and partial clothing "came in!" "What! Sacrifice the artistic airiness of blue paint to the languorous luxury of sheep-skins! Assuredly the downfall of the nation is at hand!" So it has ever been, and so it always will be to the end of time. To every ha'porth of creative sack, there will always be a prodigious quantity of critical bread. For wine is scarce, but the supply of wheat is practically inexhaustible. Still your critic is a useful creature; as the tradesmens' circulars put it, he "supplies a long-felt want." Opinions are as necessary as clothes; no self-respecting diner-out can dispense with one or the other; but home-bred opinions, like home-made garments, do not sit gracefully upon the wearer, so we invite the aid of the journalist and

the tailor, and the inner and the outer man become alike resplendent.

Yes, he is indeed a brave man nowadays who can think for himself in matters of art, and who dares moreover to give utterance to his convictions. We bow to authority like a gentleman-usher, and the gospel of the cock-sure makes many converts. But is it not strange that in this age of abundant periodical literature the sanctity of the printed page should still be preserved inviolate? The opinion of Smith, when pronounced at a dinner table, has no greater weight than that of Brown, or Jones, or Robinson; but adorned with the editorial "we," and passed through the printing press, it becomes at once the deliverance of an oracle.

Far be it from me to attack the general body of critics. In certain branches of art they are skilled experts. The discoverer of Turner is himself an artist of no mean excellence, and the eulogist of Wordsworth was a true poet. In general literature it is novelists who are invited to pronounce an opinion on their brother novelists; and when a great history is produced, or an important treatise on philosophy is given to the world, it is to experts in those sciences that the task of criticism is entrusted. It is true that a little log-rolling may sometimes ensue, and rivalry may give rise to unfair estimates: but at any rate literary critics have some sort of knowledge of their subjects, and consequently their opinions are at least worthy of consideration. But the particular class of layers-down-of-the-law I have in my mind—a class more interesting perhaps to readers of *The Theatre* than any other—is that of Dramatic Critics. They are a mighty power in the theatrical world. Managers bow down before them; and actors tremble at their frown or thrill with rapture at their smile. Let us briefly consider their title to our respect and reverence.

Personally—I hasten to admit it—they are most imposing and impressive. See them enter a theatre upon a first night! Observe their anxious care-worn faces! Do they not look as if upon their shoulders rested the entire responsibility for the British drama from Marlowe to Mr. Sims? And then their gravity! No judge about to try a criminal could look more solemn. They take their play-bills as if they were indictments, and glance at the advertisements as though they would like to give them a bad notice on the spot. Then, after a nod to one colleague and a moody whisper to another, they sigh softly, and settle themselves in their stalls. "Ah, good people," they seem to say, as they glance round at the other first-nighters, mere eager playgoers, "we are not like unto you! We have not come hither for enjoyment, we have a sacred duty to perform. A being more than common venturesome has dared to write a play, and other daring souls have determined to act it. They must now take the consequences." And they proceed to sharpen their pencils with an air of deadly determination. But, bless you, it is "only their fun." They are the kindest-hearted creatures in the world, and will always say a kind word, if they can, for an actor-manager, especially if he happens to be a popular favourite. Oh, their hearts are right enough; it is their—but more of this anon.

But what of the claims of these excellent creatures to pose as dramatic authorities? What knowledge of the subject do they possess? What is their previous training? One gentleman, for instance, is an authority on horse-racing, another is absorbed in the study of brain-disease—in other people, a third is wont to discourse mellifluously on corn-fields, poppies and other odds and ends of nature. These are harmless hobbies, and their riders no doubt worthy men. But why dramatic critics? Have they made a profound study of the science of dramatic construction, and have they a practical acquaintance with the art of acting. It may be urged that such qualifications are wholly unnecessary. A play as produced on a first-night is a complete piece of work, the joint result of the author's ideas, the actors' interpretation, and the efforts of the producer, but—and I will readily admit it—its effect, being absolutely emotional, is direct and sudden, and the plain man requires no technical knowledge to enable him to judge whether he is on the one hand amused or interested, or on the other, bored; that is to say whether it is a good play or a bad one. But that is just the point. If the critic, after the first performance were content to give a mere report of the production, that is to say a narrative of as much of the plot as he can remember, and a statement of its reception at the hands of the first-night audience, no one could complain. But that unfortunately would not be deemed a competent criticism. The construction of the piece must be fully dealt with, and the skill of the various actors adequately discussed. And this, after a single hearing of a play, is, I maintain, absolutely impossible. Let it be understood that I am not speaking of the average melodrama of the "falsely-accused" type, nor the fatuous farce of the hack playwright; I have in my mind the important plays of the leading dramatists, men who have already made their mark, and whose productions give them the right to careful consideration.

Let us take an instance. A play was produced by a dramatist in the very front rank. It was a comedy of modern manners. The author had discarded convention and placed upon the stage real men and women. Their words, their actions, were those of human creatures, such as we meet in every-day life. The general tone of the piece was comedy, but occasionally tragedy was, so to speak, just round the corner. The critics were aghast, the method was new to them. "Down with these incomprehensible novelties!" they cried. So, notwithstanding the enthusiastic reception of the piece, they "went for it," as the phrase is. What else could they do? There was no time for thought, no time for another visit to the theatre to find out which was right, the author or themselves. They had to make up their minds while driving to the newspaper office. So each in his characteristic style, the facetiously personal, the decorously dull, the flippantly fatuous, or the picturesquely ponderous, forthwith proceeded to damn the play. And it ran for months—but that is an irrelevant detail.

But perhaps after all it is the system that is to blame and not the

man. As I said before, there is every reason to believe that most of the dramatic critics are honest, well-meaning persons, with an adequate sense of responsibility, and a desire to do their duty. Their self-importance and cheerful dogmatism are mere foibles common to other callings, such for instance as that of the criticizer of the critic. But so long as they persist in the belief that a single visit to a play can furnish them with the necessary material for an exhaustive criticism, and that mere first-nighting is a close study of the drama, their articles will still continue to be regarded as exquisite specimens of journalistic English—nothing else. For, failing that knowledge of the construction of plays which is acquired by the working play-wright, and that close acquaintanceship with the actor's art that comes from personal experience, nothing but a careful and sympathetic study of the best modern work can supply the critic with such a knowledge of stage technique as will enable him to criticise intelligently and fairly, apportioning to each person concerned—whether author, actor, or producer—his fair share of praise and blame.

Some of the fraternity will probably reply that there is no such thing in existence as good modern work, that it is all hopelessly bad ; and that if good plays are wanted they must be imported from abroad—Norway, Belgium, the West Indies, and elsewhere. But that is beside the question. These superior persons can decry the contemporary drama in the abstract as much as they please when pouring forth their souls into the Reviews. All I ask is that, when invited to give an opinion on a particular production, the work of any of those men whose previous efforts have extorted their admiration, they should endeavour, before giving judgment, to *understand*. Let them approach the new piece, not in a "hole-picking" spirit, but in a mental condition of intelligent receptivity. Let them lay aside all desire to carp and cavil, and allow the author, if he can, to make the desired impression. If he fails, the play, so far as the critics are concerned, is bad, and they can say so ; but if, on the other hand, they are interested or amused let them be content in the first instance to supply the public with a simple record of the emotional effect of the play upon themselves, and reserve for future consideration and discussion the causes of that effect, or in other words, a critical estimate of the production.

But the critic will doubtless reply that he is conditioned by modern journalistic requirements. The public, he will say, desire but a single notice, and that must appear in print at the earliest opportunity ; and a second notice would be so much stale copy liable to be crowded out by the Fires and Inquests. Then I will appeal to him in the name of Art and the welfare of the drama. And he must listen, for these are his own especial Shibboleths. Is he not perpetually calling upon managers in the name of Art to produce unprofitable plays, and ever dinning into the ears of dramatists that it is their duty, if they have any regard for the welfare of the drama, to cast to the winds all thoughts of large

percentages and write plays that will bring not fortune but fame? Then let the critic apply to himself these altruistic principles. I will admit that an immediate first-night notice is necessary; but the ordinary newspaper reader will be quite content with a graphic narrative of the plot of the play. Then let him have it at once, all piping hot. But, in the interests of Art, the critic should postpone all comment until he shall have thoroughly studied the production and have mastered the author's general scheme and intention, and the actor's interpretation. And when he has accomplished this to his own satisfaction, let him embody his ripe decision in a "letter to the Editor." His position in the literary world will, of course, ensure its immediate insertion. And what though the labour involved be unremunerative! Will he not have the proud satisfaction of knowing that he has made some sacrifice of time and trouble in the interests of Art and for the sake of the welfare of the drama!

And think what a knowledge of stage technique he will acquire? Who knows but that in time he may be able to write a play himself? Not the unaccepted curtain-raiser, which, roughly speaking, is the ordinary contribution of the critic to the contemporary drama, but a full-blown five-act tragedy, worthy of production at a September *matinée*.

ROMANY.



“In the Season.”

A one-act play by LANGDON E. MITCHELL.

[THE RIGHTS OF REPRESENTATION ARE RESERVED.]

Dramatis personæ :—

SIR HARRY COLLINGWOOD : EDWARD FAIRBURNE : SYBIL MARCH.

Scene—A Room in Sir Harry Collingwood's House.

(*Edward Fairburne discovered. Letter in his hand.*)

Fair. : Well, that's the conclusion of my first love affair, if it can go by that name. At least, I'm sure she knows I care for her ; three weeks ago I almost believed she cared for me. Then this extraordinary misunderstanding came about, and so, after all these months I have never squarely told her what I felt. To-night puts an end to it. She will dance the waltz she promised me a week ago ; after that we say “Farewell.” (*Reads letter.*)

“I shall always follow your course in life with interest ; you know that I wish you happiness and indeed every good thing that can befall you. But when one of two friends ceases to believe in the other, however happy they may have been, it is best that each should go his own way, is it not ? Forgive me for thinking that it is.—SYBIL MARCH.”

It's prettily said ; you might even suppose she cared—a little.

(*Enter Sir Harry Collingwood. Fairburne puts letter in pocket.*)

Sir H. : Halloa, Fairburne.

Fair. : That you, Collingwood ?

Sir H. : What in the world brought you up here ? Are you one of those men who like to be alone—at a dance ?

Fair. : Such a beastly row with the music downstairs.

Sir H. : You haven't noticed that my Corot's gone !

Fair. : Oh !

(*Sir H. goes to table ; sits.*)

Sir H. : Sold it—card debts—sad world ! Let's have a quiet smoke. Like my mother's party ? Dull people of course, but the gowns are pretty. What a lot of widows there are about ! Must be the influenza.

Fair. : Are you as down on widows as you used to be ?

Sir H. : Matter of taste. A widow can be an angel—with an effort. Personally I object to remnants. My theory is that a well-ordered mind prefers the rose upon its stalk.

First produced at the Strand Theatre on Thursday afternoon, May 26th, 1892, with the following cast :—Sir H. C., Mr. Herbert Waring ; Fairburne, Mr. Bernard Gould ; Sybil, Miss May Whitty.

Fair. : Very good for you, that last.

Sir H. : *Apropos*, have you seen Sybil March ?

Fair. : Where's the *apropos* ?

Sir H. : Oh, fresh young girl—nothing second-hand about her ; no dog's ears ; no notes on the margin.

Fair. : Ah ! after a London season, and a winter spent in Lady Lavinia's country house ? I wish I could cultivate such a talent for blind faith in humanity.

Sir H. : Where'd you dine to-night, Boxee ? Dinner must have been frightful.

Fair. : I'm in earnest.

Sir H. : So am I. If Miss March is not a charming girl, what is she ?

Fair. (*rises and leans on table*) : I'll tell you what she is. She's a girl who's changed every best thing in her in one season. It's as if the London air had withered her ; she's not what she was.

Sir H. : Neither are you. You used to be gay and amusing ; now you've grown moral and dull.

Fair. : Personal !

Sir H. : I wish I could be so personal as to find out what's the matter with you. I understood you were an admirer of hers. Has some lucky man cut you out ? Is that it ?

Fair. : You know Chester ?

Sir H. : The co-respondent in that delightful case ? Of course I know him. He was black-balled yesterday at the Junior Satellites.

Fair. : Chester is a friend of Lady Lavinia's. We were all down at her country house over Sunday. What would you think of a girl who allowed that man to hang about her ?

Sir H. : If the girl were Sybil March, I'd think she was young.

Fair. : When he gives her the very most candid French novels to read—then you think she's too young to see anything in them ?

Sir H. : Certainly I do.

Fair. : Well, you're hopeless. I told her my opinion of Chester.

Sir H. : And she told you to mind your business ?

Fair. : Quite so.

Sir H. : Fairburne, I'm going to preach some eloquent but brutal truths to you ; the first of which is, that you're making an egregious ass of yourself. Miss March is thrown with a fast set in her aunt, Lady Lavinia's house. She affects their tone and plays the cynic. Chester was a guest. She was bound to treat him courteously. As for the books, either she never read 'em, or if she did, she didn't know what they meant. A girl with eyes like that know what such things mean ! Oh ! Why on earth did you tell me you didn't care about her ?

Fair. : Does it look as if I did ?

Sir H. : Never saw a case of such desperate infatuation !

Fair. : As it's you, I'll admit I did care for her ; I don't now. I see now.

Sir H. : See ! You wouldn't see an elephant if he sat down in

your lap. My dear boy, I'm in earnest ; it's a monstrous good little girl.

Fair. : She was all that last season.

Sir H. : What a heat you get up over an affair of last season.

Fair. : You think it's lasted over, Collingwood. You don't know me. (*Takes letter from pocket.*) If this scrap of paper were a letter from her, the last I could ever expect, I'd just as soon use it (*lights his cigarette with letter*) as I have this. (*Throws letter more than half-burned in the ash-tray on table.*)

Sir H. : Frightful infatuation ! Incurable ! See here, Fairburne ; here's a fellow this evening who will probably take the opportunity of offering himself to Miss March. He's not a bad lot, and a much older acquaintance of mine than you are, Boxee ! but as I've forced a confidence out of you, I feel I owe it to you to tell you how matters stand. If you have any uncertainty as to your feelings towards Miss March, perhaps this may help you to find out what they really are.

Fair. : Very good of you.

Sir H. : Yes, it is good of me. (*Rises.*) He trusts the girl, which is more than you do. Who knows, perhaps he'll get his deserts.

Fair. : I wish the other man luck ; I'm out of it.

Sir H. (going) : That's my dance now, with Miss March herself. Are you coming down ?

Fair. : Finish my cigarette first.

Sir H. : Can't wait for you. (*Exit.*)

Fair. : I wonder who the other fellow is. Chester's not here this evening. Will she care when I tell her I'm off to the Cape next week ?

(*Sir Harry and Sybil heard speaking outside.*)

Sir H. : Shall we sit it out ? This way then.

(*Fairburne rises.*)

Sybil. : Anywhere where it's quiet.

Fair. : By Jove ! Here she comes with Collingwood. He's met her on the stairs.

Sir H. : This room's cooler, I assure you. Ah, Fairburne, I want Miss March to see a couple of pictures I hung here.

Sybil : Good evening.

Fair. (to Sybil) : Good evening. I fancy the next dance is ours.

Sybil : I think it is.

Fair. : Shall I call for you here ? (*Goes up to C. going out.*)

Sybil (to Fair.) : If you will. (*To Sir H.*) But where's your great Corot ?

Sir H. (to Fair.) : Are you off ?

Fair. : Sorry ; I've a waltz with Miss Millbank (*exit.*)

Sir H. : Ah, the Corot's gone.

Sybil : And what is there left ?

Sir H. : That's a new Daubigny. (*Goes to easel.*)

Sybil : It's a most lovely sky. The meadow's sweet. What a

contented looking creature a cow is. I suppose it's because they don't have to make conversation. They chew the cud for small talk.

Sir H.: I should never fancy that small talk cost you an effort.

Sybil: Ah, the subjects are so limited. Weather, last dance, Dissolution, the new play, "Children of the Ghetto," and the great divorce suit.

Sir H.: I should like to hear you on each;

Sybil: "Are you going to see Mrs. Beere?" "Yes, I think she's wonderful." "No, I go to the Haymarket only to see the gowns. Oh, certainly Wilde's more dramatic than Shakespeare. Of course Shakespeare wrote for the study; he should never be acted." "But then, the pit, you know, they like him."

Sir H. (*crosses and sits at table*): Bravo! let me hear the divorce case.

Sybil: "What shocking disclosures! Such a state of affairs! Right in our midst, you know. I say to my husband, my dear, if ever you——" That's the way they're doing it downstairs now. But it's too painful to continue. Let's forget all that. What I really need is—not an audience—but a confessor.

Sir H.: Allow me to fulfil the office.

Sybil: Well, to begin with, I'm *tired to death* of the Season. I'm so *bored* with the man who takes me down to dinner. It always seems to be the same man at every house I go to. Then—may I really confess? (*points at the picture with fan*)—I miss that so much: the country, cows, and chickens, and ducks and green things. If you can believe it, I miss beyond words not seeing the *sun* set every day. Isn't it foolish?

Sir H.: No, only natural. You care so much for your own home, I can scarcely imagine your ever being willing to leave it.

Sybil: I never shall be.

Sir H.: How about the Fairy Prince—when he blows the horn at your castle gate?

Sybil: It's a cracked horn, it won't blow; or if the horn is sound, then it's the Prince that's cracked.

Sir H.: How do you think you'd like Somerset?

Sybil: Ah, Balchet Court is in Somerset, isn't it?

Sir H.: I hope to see you there some day.

Sybil: Will you ask me down?

Sir H.: To stay as long as you like.

Sybil: Oh, but I shall stay a very long time.

Sir H. (*rises and crosses to Sybil*): Suppose I ask you quite seriously to stay on for ever, and to share all I have? There are things I cannot give you; but all that I can is yours to take or to leave, and when I say this I mean my life and happiness as well as other things. Don't give me an answer now.

Sybil: I'm afraid I must.

Sir H.: I'm sorry you're afraid. Mayn't I ask you to delay it till to-morrow? I offer you all I have; your refusal or acceptance means more than—I don't wish to say false or foolish things to you

—but my life is in your hands ; I ask you only to deal seriously with it.

Sybil : It is because I know how much it must mean to a man like yourself, how little of a light matter it can be to you, that I feel I must give you your answer now.

(*Pause.*)

Sir H. : I have nothing to hope then ?

(*Pause.*)

Sybil : Nothing.

Sir H. : I should be glad to think that not final, not absolute ?

Sybil : It is final—absolute. (*He turns away. Pause.*) I—I'm very sorry. You must know how this grieves a woman. But I should never forgive myself if I kept you in a false suspense—if I didn't tell you the *truth*.

Sir H. : You are always kind and always gentle. (*Pause.*) You'll not feel it impertinent, Miss March, if I ask you whether it is simply that you don't care for me, or whether there's another man luckier than I ?

Sybil : Whether there were or were not, Sir Harry, my decision would be the same.

Sir H. : Thank you. I accept that as conclusive. (*Goes up. Pause.*) When a man has received a final "No," he is very apt, Miss March, if he realises how much he has missed, to take all the more practical interest in the happiness of his friends. That's my case at present. There's a young fellow whose condition gives me some concern. I wish you as a woman would advise me about him.

Sybil : May I know his name ?

Sir H. : His name is Edward Fairburne.

Sybil : And what is Mr. Fairburne's peculiar misery ?

Sir H. : He's a very good fellow.

Sybil : That's hardly a misfortune.

Sir H. : I know no truer friend.

Sybil : That again shouldn't worry you.

Sir H. : I never saw a man so changed.

Sybil : For the better I hope.

Sir H. : Ah, Miss March, you're laughing at me ; but the fact is he's very deeply in love.

Sybil : And still you're concerned about him. The novels all say being in love is the very summit of good fortune.

Sir H. : When it's returned.

Sybil : So the lady is obdurate ? (*Rising.*) Shall we go ?

Sir H. : I am afraid she is obdurate. Tell me now, here's the very best of young fellows, but he fails to please the fancy of the woman he's set his heart on. There's no other man ahead of him. What should he do ?

Sybil : Do ! You're making game of me. You don't really ask me that ?

Sir H. : Yes.

Sybil: Why, tell your young friend to make love to another woman, and forget the first. *Similia similibus*—the cure's homœopathic, but certain.

Sir H.: Ah, you're not serious. With him it's a woman, not women—there's no question

(*Sybil picks up half-burned letter and reads it.*)

about his affection for the girl.

Sybil: Indeed! No question about his affection for the girl. H'm! (*Reading.*) Sir Harry, have you been smoking here?

Sir H.: Yes, a cigarette.

Sybil: It was you who lit your cigarette with this?

Sir H.: No, I fancy it was Fairburne. Why?

Sybil: Because in that case I should like to offer it as a proof to you of whether Mr. Fairburne's affection is as real as you say.

Sir H.: I don't catch your idea.

Sybil: Perhaps a country girl's ideas are extravagant. You see that? (*Shows letter.*)

Sir H.: Yes. (*Realises.*)

Sybil: From a worshipper of a woman, even from a man of breeding, one would expect something more. You have guessed, Sir Harry. Mr. Fairburne *has* been good enough to devote himself to me. You pay your friend compliments. I will leave it to you if they are merited. I wrote to Mr. Fairburne this morning to bid him good-bye. It's probable that we shall not meet again; this is my letter. In it I tried to say that I had a real interest in his future, and a regard for himself. Had you been in your friend's place would you have lit your cigar with my letter?

Sir H.: I beg pardon, I think I'm the offender. Fairburne probably dropped the letter unconsciously, I suppose I picked it up, lit my cigarette and then threw it down there.

Sybil: Why seek to cover your friend with a lie?

Sir H.: Miss March!

Sybil: On your word of honour, is that the truth, Sir Harry?

(*Pause.*)

Sir H.: No.

Sybil: Then *that* seems to me commentary enough on Mr. Fairburne's affection. (*Goes up to the door.*)

Sir H.: She's angry! she must care for him (*aside.*) (*To Sybil.*) I fear it was in a freak of sudden bitterness that my friend—

Sybil: It was no freak. It was the simple expression of his disbelief in me.

Sir H.: You're wrong—I feel sure that—Ah!

(*Enter Fairburne.*)

Here he is. Well, Boxee, speak of the — and he appears.

Fair: I can say one thing in character: it's cooler up above.

Sir H.: By-the-way, Miss March, you haven't noticed my Whistler. I want you to tell me—quite soberly—just what you think of it.

Sybil: If I can. (*Crossing to the picture.*)

Sir H.: I'm an idolater at that shrine, you know—to me no one else has ever painted the night.

Sybil: Ah! (*Removes curtain from picture.*)

Sir H. (to Fair. aside): Fairburne, you have a chance. The girl loves you. You're throwing away your and her happiness. (*To Sybil.*) The gradations in the greyness, Miss March—the——

Sybil (engrossed): Wonderful!

Sir H.: Listen. (*To Fair.*) I love that girl, I have this moment asked her to be my wife. She refused me. (*To Sybil.*) You make out the ice on the river?

Sybil: Oh, very clearly.

Sir H. (to Fair): But, act as you're doing, and—mark my words—she won't refuse me twice. Understand, if you don't take your chance I shall take mine.

Fair.: You're welcome to it.

Sir H. (to Fair.): That child loves you. Do you know what a woman's love's worth? (*To Sybil.*) Now, isn't there genius in that? (*To Fair.*): I've done my best for you. (*To Sybil.*) Fairburne's hopeless; he didn't know till I told him that the R.A.'s hung their pictures on the line so as to give the younger men the benefit of a top light. Isn't that delicate?

Sybil: And such colours!

Fair. (aside): So he's the other man!

Sir H. (to Sybil): I thought you'd like it. I must look Lady Lavinia up. Don't forget that 22 is mine—22! It's a waltz. (*Exit.*)

Fair.: This is our dance, Miss March. Shall we go down or——

Sybil: Stay here by all means. It's only a dull polka, and I'm sure you don't approve of dancing!

Fair.: I!

Sybil: I know you don't approve of frivolity in general. But idle people you know——. After all, we must do something.

Fair.: Women have so few ways of loafing; still, you all smoke now.

Sybil: Oh, of course, but there's only one real *diversion* which we're allowed.

Fair.: That is?

Sybil: Marriage. Oh, no sensible girl wants to marry, that goes without saying. But then we have mammas, just as you have duns. They worry us, and fret, and push us, till at last, out of sheer desperation, we pay the debt we owe society. But it's shockingly short-sighted of us, don't you think?

Fair.: Oh, awful.

Sybil: After all, marriage isn't like death—one's still alive after it. Think of the *ennui*!

Fair.: What would you propose instead. Political rights for women?

Sybil: I'm afraid rights are only another name for duties, and Heaven deliver us from our duties.

Fair.: Quite so. Personally, you'd prefer——

Sybil: Personally I should make publicity my aim. Personally I prefer to be the vogue. I really believe I'd break a commandment to be talked about. To feel that a knot of men across the room are discussing you—oh!

Fair.: Well, that's a feasible ideal. One gets talked about with a minimum of effort.

Sybil: Ah, but to keep the curiosity of society always on the alert, to have everybody agog to know what your next movement will be, to fever the public mind with the particulars of your personality, to inflate it with rumours, agitate it with your distresses, humour it with variety of incident, and sell your photographs in every shop-window in London. That's an art that very few are proficient in.

Fair.: There you have us men at a disadvantage; we can't be professional beauties.

Sybil: No, not easily; but what is your own ideal for yourself?

Fair.: The Cape.

Sybil: How dull.

Fair.: Open-air life.

Sybil: Provincial.

Fair.: I intend going next week. There's a new company formed to do something or other out there—I don't really know what—but they want young men.

Sybil: Oh! what do people do there?

Fair.: Lose their money, and come back disgusted.

Sybil: You're inexperienced in those matters, aren't you?

Fair.: Oh! I don't know. Why?

Sybil: I should strongly advise you to talk to Mr. Chester before you sail; ask him for his experience; he might help you in a thousand ways.

Fair.: I fancy his experience there must have been varied.

Sybil: Oh! very indeed. That's why he's just the man to supplement your inexperience.

Fair. (aside): By Jove! We're carrying this game pretty far.

Sybil (rises): What an odd room your friend has! Pictures, no furniture, and books. Have you read all these books? Zola, Balzac, Maupassant?

Fair.: A good many—and you?

Sybil: Oh, isn't it a part of a girl's education?

Fair.: You think so?

Sybil: One musn't be ignorant.

Fair.: I entirely agree with you. One should breathe as much foul air as possible in order to know it next time one enters a drain. What we want is to illuminate one's mind with the knowledge of vice.

Sybil: There are many things we want to do. For instance, to have no faith in people, to doubt their innocence, and make them unhappy—but you see I can't philosophise. After all, virtue and vice—that's all heredity, isn't it?

Fair. : Oh, certainly.

Sybil : I'm afraid, you know, that virtue with me consists in a new bonnet ; and vice is not to attract men.

Fair. : Don't you think it's time to be sincere ?

Sybil : Sincere ! How ?

Fair. : Don't you think we've been the other thing long enough ? Why do you wish me to believe these things of you ? (*Pause.*) I'm off to the Cape in three days. Can we not be ourselves and speak frankly for the last few minutes in which we shall be together ?

Sybil : If I were perfectly frank you'd not believe me, so where's the use ?

Fair. : How can you say that ?

Sybil : How can I say it. I wrote to you this morning a letter as sincere as any man could wish. Did you believe me ? (*Pause.*) May I ask what you did with that letter ?

Fair. : Miss March—I——

Sybil (*rises*) : Is it your custom, Mr. Fairburne, by way of proving your belief in a woman's sincerity, by way of esteem for the frankness you insist on, to light your cigarette with her letter of farewell (*throws letter back on ash tray*), and to throw it, half burned, into an ash tray where anyone could pick it up ?

Fair. : I thought it burned entirely—I regret——

Sybil : What you have to regret is a heart that can think so much evil of other people

Fair. : It was done in a moment of anger—jealousy if you will.

Sybil : It is all of a piece with your misapprehension of my character, and yet you once understood me—three months ago—you remember the day, I'm sure ! (*Fair. assents.*) I said some foolish words that you chose to misinterpret, and ever since we've grown further and further apart.

Fair. : We have.

Sybil : At first I couldn't believe you thought ill of me. You had no reason to ; and I went on with a word here and an action there, just to try you, until at last to my horror I saw there was nothing you didn't suspect me of. You have hurt me so that I felt wicked enough to hurt you in turn. I was proud. I wouldn't condescend to explain myself.

Fair. ; I'm sorry.

Sybil : In those days I thought you loved me, but of course you couldn't love a woman, worldly, base almost, a girl who received attention from a man she should keep at a distance, and who'd read books no nice girl would read. Let me tell you this : my pride saved me from one thing, and if I was foolish and tender enough to be stung by your disbelief in me, I was again far too proud to care to undeceive you. When you looked for vanity and worldliness in me, I was determined you should find them, and you have. As for the books, I know better than to want to look at ugly things when I am not obliged to. I've not read a chapter in one of them. I trust you will remember these things—when you are at the Cape.

Fair.: May I speak to you as frankly as you have to me?

Sybil: If you can.

Fair.: I am going to ask your pardon.

Sybil: Do you think you have earned a pardon?

Fair.: Miss March, I make no excuse to you; none is possible. Even my regrets now are nothing to the point. This only is to the point—my own lack of faith in you, my own folly, faithlessness, if you will, has troubled my life till I scarcely seem to myself to be the same person. If I have done wrong to you, the wrong has reacted upon myself; it has made me feel that life is a wretched thing. I can say no more. I beg you only to believe that my folly has caused me long and keen suffering.

(Pause.)

Sybil (in low tones): I do believe it.

Fair.: I shall be gone some years.

Sybil: Yes?

Fair.: May I write to you?

Sybil: No.

Fair.: If I return here and you've not found your happiness already—

Sybil: I see no reason for making a provision for a future so far away. When two people come to an end with each other, Mr. Fairburne, surely it is best to make the break final. If we no longer make each other happy, we can scarcely expect to do so—at some distant period. I have letters of yours which I will return. Will you do the same by everything that you have of mine?

(Pause.)

Fair.: I have so many little remembrances, I shall hardly know where to begin.

Sybil: Oh!

Fair.: You'll laugh, but I always carry this little picture of you in my pocket. To be truthful, I stole it. You'll let me keep that?

Sybil: No.

Fair. (*gives Sybil the photograph*): Then there's this charm—must I?

Sybil: Yes.

Fair.: I have a five-leaved clover you gave me in the meadow last Easter—might I keep that—for luck?

Sybil: I suppose you may—for luck.

Fair.: There's one thing I shall not be able to return to you. The memory of many very happy days spent with you.

(Pause.)

Sybil: There is much that we can't return to each other. (*With breaking voice.*) Before we part for good I want to say this to you: You know now that I'm very proud—easily hurt—perhaps I should have acted differently. Perhaps I should have explained myself to you. I'm sorry; I don't want you to remember me as I am not—

and I'm not bitter. I'm even very happy sometimes. You'll think of me in that way, won't you ?

Fair. : Yes, I will !

Sybil : I shall try to forget everything that was not quite perfect in the days we spent together, and I think we needn't be so absurd—you may keep the picture and the charm.

Fair. : Thank you. Good-bye.

Sybil : Good-bye.

Fair. : Won't you give me your hand ?

Sybil : I'd—rather—not. (*Sobbing quietly.*) Good luck ! (*She turns from him.*)

Fair. (*taking her hand in his*) : Sybil, you haven't returned to me the one thing I want, without which there can be no happiness for me—my heart, my heart's love.

Sybil : I never had it.

Fair. : You have it now.

Sybil : No, no.

Fair. : Sybil, forget—forgive. Why do you laugh ?

Sybil : Because—— (*Sobbing and covering her face with her hands.*)

Fair. : You're not laughing—let me see your face. Say that you give me a chance. I'll do all I can—be all I can, endeavour, wait patiently, learn faith and goodness from you, if so I can win your love.

Sybil : You had it once.

Fair. : May I try to win it again ? Sybil, say yes.

Sybil (*whispering*) : Yes.

Fair. : Thank you. (*He kisses her hands.*)

(*Enter Sir H.*)

Sir H. : Miss March, you mustn't deprive us of your presence too long. We're missing you downstairs.

Sybil : Suppose we go ?

Sir H. (*aside*) : Fairburne, I congratulate you.

Fair. (*aside*) : I owe it to you.

Sir H. : Nonsense ! nonsense ! (*To Sybil.*) Fairburne's an incorrigible sentimentalist, Miss March. Whenever he's in luck, he ascribes it to someone else. May I take you down ? He's quite incorrigible !

Sybil (*turning at the door and smiling happily at Fairburne*) : Oh, indeed.

(*Curtain.*)



On Acting :

AND THE NEED OF A DRAMATIC ACADEMY.



GR^{EAT} actors are invariably their own teachers. Whatever is best in their acting they have taught themselves. Possessing an innate experience which enables them instinctively to grasp the demands and limitations of scenic presentation, they note at once, and seize upon, every emotion, and every movement and intonation that is capable of reproduction on the stage. Without this capacity for self-tuition, mere physical qualifications would not have ensured fame. Genius possesses, above all things, the power of intense and prolonged toil, of a continual striving after excellence, a ceaseless watchfulness, a constant endeavour to master every technical difficulty of art. An actor is great because he has learned to become dignified without emphasis, to be simple without triviality, and to be passionate without extravagance, because he can portray the whole meaning and whole emotion of an author, and add to every character he undertakes some new attraction or unexpected force ; this skill is acquired only at the expense of laborious days, and often at the sacrifice of pecuniary gain and of personal ambition. Qualities common to all great actors are sincerity of purpose, reverence for their calling, and admiration for its most gifted exponents. It was the acting of Le Kain that Talma extolled ; Sanson's boast was that he had discovered Rachel, whose genius excited the enthusiasm of Salvini. Art, to the true artist, is not delusion, but illusion ; not sentiment but execution ; the power of accurate and honest expression. To dispense with conventionalism does not mean to sacrifice essentials. To use moderation is not to degenerate into tameness. There is with the artist no toleration of false conceptions or cold emotions to please the taste of an ill-judging public. "Le Kain," says Talma, "resolved to study only that part of the public who were worth pleasing. He rejected all the charlatanism of his art, all the claptraps which so many others seek to discover. He was consequently one of the actors the least appreciated in his day, but he was the most admired by competent judges, and he rendered tragedy more familiar without depriving it of its majestic proportions." Our own Sarah Siddons, if she had no extravagant enthusiasm for her calling, was not indifferent to its demands. She had a true sense of what an actress owes to her art. She did not admit gossips to her dressing-room to talk of any subject rather than that of the representation on which she was immediately engaged.

But if the great actor is his own master, he also exists as a master

for the guidance of all those who are less gifted than himself. The teacher who is profoundly versed in the art of a great actor, can impart instruction to others that will enable them to avoid the faults of inexperience and save them both time and labour in fruitless experiments. Leonardo da Vinci was of opinion that the pupil did better to rely upon generally accepted ideals in the study of his art than to satisfy himself with his own conceptions. A painter, he says, who has clumsy hands will paint similar hands in his work, unless long and careful study of good models has taught him to avoid doing so. "Look about you," he says, "and take the best part of many beautiful faces of which the beauty is confirmed rather by public fame than your own judgment. For if you should be ugly, you might select faces that were not beautiful." It has been said that art has no business to exist if it is not to be more beautiful than reality. In any case, to neglect to study the art of a great actor is to lose all right standard of excellence, and when the right standard of excellence is lost, it is not likely that much that is excellent will be produced.

Acting does not come by nature, and the very separation of art from nature involves calculation. Every detail is deliberative or has been deliberated. The actor's so-called "inspiration," says George Lewes, is the mere haphazard of carelessness. He is seeking an expression which he ought to have found while studying his part. The *timbre* of the voice, the energy of the spirit may vary, but his methods are invariable. Accent, inflexion, attitude, looks, all have to be reproduced with the same exactness, the same vigour. Of all actors Edmund Kean was the most "inspired," and yet Hazlitt, on witnessing his second appearance in the play of "Richard III.," writes, "We have little to add to our former remarks, for Mr. Kean went through his part nearly as before." There is departure from reality in stage accessories, in situations, in character, in language, in disposition, and *venue* of the auditor, which are all at variance with the experiences of daily life. It follows therefore that the actor cannot be effectual on the stage if he is in ignorance of the psychological conditions on which effect depends. He must *appear* natural without being natural. He must never be so far carried away by his imagination and sensibility as to forget the *optique du théâtre*. Fanny Kemble thus sums up the acquirements that are indispensable to the actor, and considers that absolute proficiency in them must be obtained by the pupil before he may allow his own discretion to be his tutor :—

"To know how to stand still.

To move your hands and arms without your feet and legs.

To move your feet and legs without your hands and arms.

To move your whole body.

To dance well.

To fence well.

To play single-stick well.

To articulate words from one syllable to six progressively.

To read prose, poetry, and blank verse.

To declaim prose, poetry, and blank verse.”*

Of all tasks, the most difficult of accomplishment is that of gesture and movement; action should become another form of language; by-play should be kept up without absorbing the attention of the public to the detriment of your comrades. Joseph Jefferson remarks that when a strong effect is made, the eye, the pose, the very feeling should be for an instant only a picture till the audience digest it. If it be disturbed by some unmeaning movement, the strength is lost. Perhaps the cultivation of the voice is that which is most accessible to the teacher's influence. The voice of the singer, says George Lewes, is not more directly tied to time and tune than that of an actor to theatrical elocution. The voice must become a rich keyed instrument, from which can be produced at pleasure every variety of sound. Of all monotony, says Talma, that of the lungs is the most insupportable. A tragedy in verse is the severest test of the artistic skill, the literary culture, the chest power, the ear, and the voice of an actor.

No histrionic aspirant has advanced in his profession until he has discovered that he cannot act. This is the first step towards proficiency, and until it be taken there is no hope. The sooner the discovery is made the better, as there is more time and power for taking advantage of it. Sometimes the great truth is found out too late for the any remedy. Sometimes it is never found out at all, and then we have the desperate and inveterate cases of folly, self-conceit, and impertinence. Special physical qualifications are needed by the actor and where they are denied the power of presentation is denied. Unless the actor has himself the necessary faculties for expressing the passions, all the lessons in the world cannot give them to him. But given the faculties, the actor must learn the laws that govern the natural passions before he will be able to clothe the fictitious ones with real forms. Even where there is dramatic sensibility and the power of conception, there may be wanting the talent of expression; the imagination suggesting what might be done, and fevering the nerves because neither voice nor looks respond. Unfortunately there are many who have a taste and love for acting with no talent, and this is most discernible in those who never care to master the rudiments of the art. They have boundless desires, ambitions, sensations, with almost no proportions between power and desire. These devotees are the exponents of what is called *natural* acting, who believe that the very small stock of property required by an actor is a mouth, two eyes, and a nose, and who dub themselves professionals on the strength of their salary, not of their ability. Of all the cant's which are canted in this canting age, though the cant of hypocrisy may be the worst, the cant of *natural* acting is the most incomprehensible. A man may act naturally and so may a table, for it acts very well *as* a table, but if you want the table to

* *Stray Records*, by Clifford Harrison.

do duty as a sofa, it is at the best but a wooden substitute. Naturalness in acting means truthful presentation of the character indicated by the author, not the foisting on the stage of a person's own individuality or commonplace manner. To omit points from declamation, to persistently aim at the average is a facile escape from dangers and a possible failure, but much of the modern acting is in consequence dull even when inoffensive. That natural acting just now is in vogue, and has many supporters among the public is no argument in its favour except to prove that unskilled men and women may be able to act with some success by the aid of paper hangings, bric-a-brac, and cushions. Indeed there is little training needed to cater for a certain section of the public who refine upon their feelings until anything in the un-understandable way will go down with them. When acting is for the edification of those who profess advanced tastes without knowing that it is possible to be original in the sense of being unprecedented, the protestations of the discontented, of the envious, or even of those of good taste are scarcely of any consequence. The guardians of this select coterie have a method of defining everything and proving everything by canons of criticism which are much more their own than they are likely to become those of posterity.

Good acting has no element of popular effect in it, it makes no appeal to vulgar appreciation, but aims ever at the truest expression of the finest ideas. It has been often said by foreigners that the English people lack the æsthetic instinct, that moral sense which unconsciously supplies a standard of true and false art. And this is easily explained. Business is the strongest passion of an Englishman's mind, and art gives way before it with morbid liberality. There is no power, in our average playgoer, to discriminate between the art which knows its sentimental patrons, and the art which is derived from a close study of the resources of art. The quality of the actor's art is gauged by the number of encores and recalls; the standard of theatrical advancement is determined by the number of theatres built and of those who pay to go into them. There may be enthusiasts who, in the affairs of the stage, are in favour of leaving out the tradesman, but many actors might not like the divorce, and since the two have been joined together at the altar of British indifference, they will no doubt be allowed to live together for some time to come.

The stage of to-day is sacrificing the future to the present and exhausting the trained talent at its disposal with a wanton disregard for the needs of to-morrow. So long as managers have nothing more to fear than an uncritical public, there is little chance of their uniting to support a school for the training of actors. Nor does the tendency of the day favour such a scheme. There is no need to look with despair upon the feeling of independence which is now rife in all countries, except that political liberty, in so far as it affects art, leads men in the wrong direction. It leads them to think not only that men must not be coerced, but also that they

need not be taught. "No more masters," is the cry of modern young men. They have all become accomplished critics, and everyone knows everything. But none the less must it be borne in mind that every actor has at stake the honour and dignity of his calling. Whatever use or abuse he makes of his talents, in them he lives, for all time, either for the contempt or gratitude of mankind. In spite of momentary appearances to the contrary the existence of the actor's art is ensured, not by the nation's deliberate and conscious choice, but by something far more stable, the instinct of self-preservation. When all distinction between trained and untrained talent has disappeared there will no longer be found a public who will be willing to pay for its display.

WILLIAM POEL.



Condensed Dramas.

No. I.—"THE BLACK DOMINO."

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Ferndale, an unpretentious village, consisting of a Church, an Organist's Cottage, and a Tombstone.

(*Rose Berton, the organist's virtuous daughter, enters from cottage and meets Dr. Maitland, a country practitioner in top boots.*)

Dr. Maitland: Good morning; let us explain the plot!

Rose: We will.

Dr.: Lord Dashwood has a past, nevertheless he is to wed fair Mildred Vavasour. His lordship will lead the lady down an avenue of red coats over-arched with hunting crops, and they will be man and wife. That is what is called a "pink wedding."

Rose: How rapid, and yet how beautiful!

Dr.: By-the-way, your father is going blind.

Rose: Blind! oh, horror!

Dr. (to himself): Heavens, how I love her! (*To Rose.*) Good-bye for ever!

Rose (reels): For ever! oh why, oh wherefore?

Dr.: My patients object to my top boots and spurs, but the authors insist, so I must leave Ferndale for ever. (*Walks away. To himself*) Heavens, how I love her! Shall I tell her so? (*Glances at his legs.*) Alas, no! not in these boots. (*Bursts into tears and hurries away.*)

M. Berton (an elderly organist with an accent, enters): Ze museek for ze pink wedding is at last complete. It will play for five meenits only, but it is ze work of a lifetime.

Clarice (Berton's other daughter, and Lord Dashwood's past, enters): Rose, me swate little colleen!

Berton: Ah, Clarice, we have not met for ye-ars. You have a strong brogue. Are you also virtuous?

Clarice: Sure it's meself that's a monument of the same.

Berton: Var' good! Then I will proceed to play ze organ. (*Rose and he enter church.*)

Capt. Greville (the serious villain) enters joyously: Clarice! (*To her sternly.*) You dare to——

Clarice: Dare, begorra! D'ye think because I've a troifle of an Oirish accent that I'm a comic character. Sure its meself that's the evil jaynius of the piece.

Capt. G. (genially): You're a girl after my own heart. (*Confidentially.*) Being the villain, I have been on several occasions spurned by the heroine. That's why I love her, and would be revenged.

Lord Dashwood (enters gaily): Ah Grevvy, my boy, there were not enough red coats to go round, so I borrowed a black one from— (*Sees Clarice and starts.*) Ah, my past, I might have guessed it. They always turn up for the wedding.

Clarice: So sorr, ye're going to throw me over!

Lord D.: You have nothing in writing. I defy you. (*Looks off.*) Good Heavens, the wedding party is waiting at the wings! Greville, friend of my youth, place her somewhere where she won't be noticed. (*Looks round.*) Ah, that tomb in the centre of the stage. (*Greville conducts Clarice to tombstone.*)

Capt. G. (to Clarice): We might of course make a scene now and stop the wedding, but in that case what would become of the play?

Clarice (to him): Thru for you, me broth of a bhoy; we'll bide our toime.

The wedding party enter, the bride on the arm of an elderly gentleman, who is not in the bill, and looks as if he resented the omission. The bevy of bridesmaids are joyous, and the groomsmen in scarlet coats and top boots wave their whips with sportsmanlike enthusiasm. The party enter the Church, glance at the decorations for a moment, return to the churchyard, perform the pink wedding, and dance off gaily.

Honeybun (enters): I am the comic villain; the lady sitting on yonder tombstone is Lord Dashwood's past.

Dr. (who having said farewell for ever, naturally returns): Aha! Then will I round upon her to her father.

Berton (enters from church): I have played ze museek, but Helas! it only emptied ze church.

Dr. (striking an attitude): M. Berton, your daughter Clarice, in spite of her ingenuous accent, is no better than she ought to be.

Berton: Enough! Without further proof I will proceed to cast her off for ever. (*Does so.*)

(*Curtain.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Lord Dashwood's Conservatory in Town.

Lord D.: I've been going it again. I've made my past my present, or in other words, I've made a present to my past, and so I am in pressing need of £10,000.

Earl of Arlington (his father, an infirm nobleman, enters): Oh, my boy, my boy! (*Bursts into tears and hurries away.*)

(*Capt. G. and Honeybun enter.*)

Capt. G.: Dashwood, you want £10,000.

Lord D. (emphatically): I do. I always do.

Capt. G. (pointing to Honeybun): He will provide it. He only asks that you will forge your father's name.

Lord D.: With pleasure. I will retire for a second to yon contiguous greenhouse and forge. (*Does so and returns.*) And now to break with my past for ever. (*Goes out, followed by Honeybun chuckling.*)

(*Lady Dashwood enters.*)

Capt. G.: Lady Mildred, I call you Lady Mildred, not because it is your proper title, but because I love you—be mine!

Lady D.: Unhand me, sirrah!

Capt. G. (without unhanding): There is a bar between us, but that bar is going to the Fancy Dress Ball at Covent Garden to-night to meet his past.

Lady D.: But why go there to meet her?

Capt. G.: Because it is the great scene of the play.

Lady D. (reels): Ah! then I too must go.

Capt. G.: She must and shall be mi-en. (*Hurries away.*)

Lady D. (to her brother, who enters): Brother, I forget your other name, take me to the ball at Covent Garden to-night.

Her Brother: Of course I will. Is it not for that I am included in the cast? I will get you a black domino.

Lady D.: Why?

Her Brother: Because it is the name of the piece.

Earl of Arlington (who has been listening behind a palm): Oh, my boy, my boy! (*Bursts into tears and swoons.*)

(*Tableau curtain.*)

SCENE II.—Vestibule of Covent Garden Theatre.

(*Honeybun, Chevenix Chase, Dolly Chester, and others enter.*)

Honeybun: It is after office hours, I am no longer a money-lending villain, but comic relief.

Others: We all are.

Honeybun: Good: then let us be funny while they set the next scene.

Others: We will. (*They proceed to be funny.*)

(*Scene closes in.*)

SCENE III.—The Fancy Dress Ball at Covent Garden. The wedding party from Ferndale, clad in picturesque costumes, are dancing and frolicking with that air of well-bred solemnity characteristic of county families.

(*Lord D. and Clarice enter.*)

Lord D.: Kindly cease dancing for a moment, I wish to make a statement. (*Music and dancing cease, and guests promenade gloomily, resenting the interruption.*) Clarice, once more, and positively for the last time, farewell for ever.

Clarice: F'what! ye little round-faced lordling. (*Catches sight of Lady D. in the costume of a female executioner.*) F'what's this I see? 'Tis she, me hated roival!

Lady D. (to her brother): Leave me—that I may appear to be here alone, and so be compromised.

Her Brother: Right you are. I will pretend to call a cab. (*Rushes out calling, "Hansom! Hansom!"*)

Clarice (watching Lady D.): Begorra! she's listening. Now's me toime. (*Goes up to Lord D.*) Dashy, me darling, me broth of a bhoy! Ye know its meself that loves you entoirely, so come to me box and have a dhrink.

Lady D. (reels): She loves him and he consequently loves her. (*Staggers.*) I'm going off. (*Muses.*) Where shall I wake up, I wonder? Probably in the company of the villain. As—Ibsen—says—how—thrill—ing! (*Faints.*)

(*Commotion. Everyone crowds round.*)

Capt. G. (who of course recognises her): Ah! 'tis she! my chance! I'll take it—and her. (*Does so.*)

(*Curtain.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Covent Garden Market in early morning.

(*Mr. Chevalier and imitators lean against pillars in easy attitudes of negligent indifference. Flower girls, with black eyes and without, seated upon baskets doing nothing industriously.*)

Rose Berton (sitting at table placed conveniently in the roadway): Father is starving in a garret. I am earning my living as a flower-girl. I tie up a bunch, then take off my hat, and my work for the day is done.

A Comic Character (enters): I am rather drunk, and I can't find a cab. Happy thought! I will be rude to the flower-girl, and give the doctor a chance of a rescue. (*Does so.*)

Dr. M. (enters): Ah! Villain, unhand that flower lady. (*Villain unhands.*) Rose, I have taken off my boots, and at last I can tell you that I love you. I will now disappear from the piece. (*Does so.*)

Clarice (entering): Ah, Rose me darlin', the very person I expected to see. The top of the mornin' to ye!

Rose: Clarice, I am virtuous but starving, you are naughty but be-jewelled; the moral is obvious. (*Ties up another bunch of flowers and resumes her hat.*)

Clarice: Be aisy now! Although me reputation's a bit off colour, I've a heart of gould. (*To herself.*) I'll sind them a hamper. (*A pickpocket is duly chased and the scene closes in.*)

SCENE II.—Bow Street Police Station.

(*Pickpocket and comic revellers are charged with various offences, and with the assistance of realistic policemen provide abundant comic relief until the next set is ready.*)

SCENE III.—Capt. Greville's Rooms.

(*Capt. G. enters with his fair burden, Lady D.*)

Lady D. (coming round): Where am I? Ah! I knew it, in the villain's power and lodgings.

Capt. G.: Be mine.

Lady D.: Nev-u-ar.

Capt. G.: I keep open house all night. My friends are coming as usual. I will leave you for a scene with Clarice. (*Leaves.*)

Clarice (enters): Sure, I have repinted entoirely.

Lady D.: Repented! Why?

Clarice: Sure, you must ask the authors. I've come to save ye.

(*Lady D. gasps.*) Ye've seen "Lady Windermere's Fan"?

Lady D.: Yes.

Clarice: Then change cloaks and repate the business. (*They do so.*)

Lord D. (enters with Capt. G. and other revellers): Greville, you are the villain of the piece, so of course my wife is in your rooms. Produce her.

Capt. G.: With pleasure. (*Opens door. Clarice appears, and in the confusion Lady D. escapes from behind curtain, and hurries out of the room.*)

Capt. G. (to himself): How fortunate it is that Dashwood is the only man in London who never saw "Lady Windermere's Fan."

(*Curtain.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Honeybun's Office.

(*Honeybun and Capt. G. enter.*)

Capt. G.: The time has come.

Honeybun: It has, also the forged bill. I have sent for the Earl, and he will instantly obey the summons of an obscure attorney.

Lord D. (enters): Well sir.

Capt. G. (sardonically): Ha, ha!

(*Earl of Arlington and Lady D. enter.*)

Earl of A.: My girl, my girl! (*Weeps on Lady D.'s shoulder.*)

Capt. G.: Here is a bill, my lord, with your name attached, forged by your son.

Earl of A.: My boy, my boy! (*Continues to weep.*)

Capt. G.: You will of course decline to acknowledge it. In point of fact you must, for an acknowledgment of its authenticity would necessitate an addition to your limited vocabulary.

Earl of A. (stifling his emotion): Then be it mine to make it. (*All start.*) (*Proudly and defiantly.*) The bill shall be duly met. My girl, my girl! (*Weeps copiously and leaves the room with Lady D.*)

Lord D. (despairingly): Ah me! No wife, no father, no honour, no hat! Nothing but a past and a stick.

Capt. G.: Then I will leave you.

Lord D.: Stop! Up to this moment I have not had the sympathies of the audience. I now propose to secure them.

Capt. G.: How.

Lord D.: By thrashing you within an inch of your life.

(*Struggle music in orchestra. After a short stage wrestle Captain G. sinks to the ground, and Lord D. taps him playfully with his cane.*)

(*Curtain.*)

ACT V. (AND GRAND TRANSFORMATION SCENE.)

SCENE.—The "Star and Garter," Richmond (more or less).

(*The Ferndale county families, who follow Dashwood everywhere, are scattered about the stage indulging in coffee and zoedone.*)

Lord D. (enters): In spite of the last act I am not yet so sympathetic as I should like to be. Ah! Commit suicide and die on the stage! that'll knock 'em! (*Proceeds to compose his dying words.*)

Clarice (enters): Sure, its meself that's tired of being the evil jaynius of the piece. I must get a little sympathy before the curtain falls. (*Suddenly.*) Bedad, I'll commit' suicide. (*Looks about for a lethal weapon.*)

Chase (enters): I'm sick of being the melodramatic idiot. I want a little sympathy. What can I do? Commit suicide? No, the audience would regard it as humorous. I know. I will insist on buying back that bill. (*To Honeybun who enters.*) Honeybun, no matter what the cost, I must buy back that bill.

Honeybun: So you shall, and as it is the fifth act, we shall no longer be compounding a felony in doing so.

Chase (takes the bill from Honeybun, and lights a cigar with it): Dashwood, my boy, saved, saved! (*Waving the embers.*)

Lord D. (annoyed): Saved? (*To himself.*) Oh, dash it!

Chase (starts): There is suicide in the curl of his moustache. I must send for his wife—but how? Ah! the private wire to Sheen. (*Calls through telephone.*) "Are you there." (*Telephone responds in muffled accent "Yes."*) "Then telephone yourself here immediately." (*Telephonic equivalent for "Right you are" is heard.*)

Capt. G. (enters): I am ruined. Dashwood, I hate you. Your father acknowledges that he signed the bill, therefore your character is untarnished, but notwithstanding I will brand you as a forger. (*Calls all the waiters and chambermaids from the Hotel.*) Honeybun, produce the Damning Proof.

Chase (triumphantly): He can't—it's burnt.

Capt. G. (starts): Burnt?

Honeybun: I'm very sorry, Captain, but you see everybody's going

in for sympathy, and I thought I should like a bit, too, so I sold the bill.

Capt G.: Foiled, foiled, and by an idiot. (*Glowers and exit.*)

Lord D.: Now for the deed! (*Seizes a bottle of property champagne.*)

Lady D. (*emerges from the telephone*): Live! I forgive you.

Lord D.: Then am I happy once again. (*Embraces her. Aside.*) But I should like to have died on the stage.

Clarice (*seizes the discarded bottle of champagne*): Be this portion mine! (*Drinks.*)

Lady D.: That creature here? Woman!

Lord D.: Stop, don't interrupt her, she's killing herself.

Lady D. (*joyfully*): At last! Thank Heaven! (*Suddenly remembers her duty as heroine.*) I mean—that is to say—(*stretches her arms lovingly*)—Sister!

Clarice (*staggering*): I see me father, I see me mother, also me sister, me brother, and most of me other relations, ispecially my uncle—I see ye all, farewell! (*Damages a table and dies.*)

Lady D. (*affectionately regarding Lord D.*): Dashy darling, why are you still sad?

Lord D. (*with a gasp of sorrow*): My father!

Lady D. (*flies to telephone*): Are you there? (*Telephonic nod is heard.*) Then breathe a word of loving forgiveness to Dashy.

Earl of A. (*through the telephone*): 'y-'oy, 'y-'oy, oo-oo-oo.

(*Curtain.*)

W. R. W



Plays of the Month.

"THE FOOL'S REVENGE."

A drama founded by TOM TAYLOR on "Le Roi s'Amuse," by VICTOR HUGO.
Revived at the Trafalgar Square Theatre on Thursday afternoon, March 23rd, 1893.

Galeotto Manfredi ..	Mr. J. H. BARNES.	Bernardo Ascolti ..	Mr. IVAN WATSON.
Guido Malatesta ..	Mr. BASSETT ROE.	Ascanio ..	Miss NORA LESLIE.
Bertuccio ..	Mr. LIONEL BAXTER.	Ginevra ..	Miss INGRAM.
Serafino Dell'Aquila ..	Mr. P. CUNINGHAM.	Francesca Bentivoglio ..	Miss MAUD MILTON.
Baldassare Torelli ..	Mr. EDMUND GURNEY.	Flordolisa ..	Miss MABEL LANE.
Gian Maria Ordelfaffi ..	Mr. GRAHAM-WENTWORTH.	Brigitta ..	Miss D. DRUMMOND.

Because our fathers saw Phelps and their sons have seen Edwin Booth, play the distorted jester, there is a belief abroad that the character is a grand one. Never was a reputation less deserved. Bertuccio is effective no doubt. Scene by scene he excites interest, but only as a feature in the dramatic landscape. Much as a dead tree with twisted limbs stands out grotesque and gaunt against an angry evening sky, this fellow challenges attention. But if he were not set on a hill with all that orange and blood-red background of

intrigue and lust behind him, we should scarcely look a second time. The truth is, he is only canvas and sawdust stuffing. We are assured that he leads a double life—earning a living by scurril jests and vitriolic gibes in the profligate court of Manfredi, spending his salary as a pious citizen and model father. Mr. Hyde in the palace—Dr. Jekyll at home. A kind of Sherlock Holmes beggar, winning coppers from purse-proud bankers by exposing hideous sores in Lombard Street by day, and driving down in a smart buggy to his £80 villa at Tooting in the twilight. But it is nothing of the kind. Bertuccio no more leads a double life than does that ridiculous transparency of Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Henley's clumsy manipulation, Deacon Brodie. He may squirm and pull faces and gibber about revenge upon his dead wife's ravisher, but all this does not for a moment tally with the spoony sentimentalism he exudes at Bertuccio Loggia. Either he is Iago or Lear, he can't be both. Consequently we are driven to regard with grave suspicion the exaggerated emotionalism to which he becomes a garrulous victim when he discovers that he has delivered not his enemy's wife, but his own daughter into the voluptuary Duke's hands. Far otherwise is this same duke. A "reptile amorist"—in Mr. Swinburne's phrase—his is a Gargantuan appetite, and in his character of Prince Irresistible and Unappeasable—could we but see plenty of him—he would be instructive, if only from an anthropological point of view. Neither Mr. Tom Taylor nor Mr. J. H. Barnes, who makes of him a genial ruffian, will, however, permit an observation of Manfredi from this platform. To be amused or informed we must turn to the curly-wigged associates of the Duke (who chose his companions seemingly from the ranks Prince Hal consorted with), to the woebegone if gallant poet of Mr. Cunningham, the fiery poison-dealing Duchess of Miss Milton (a little suggestive of the Italy of Saffron Hill), the ancient tire-woman of quaint Miss Drummond, the hey-day in whose fifty year old blood is not tame, nor waits upon the judgment, and the winning Fiordelisa of Miss Mabel Lane. In this last performance was sufficient justification for the *matinée*. Miss Lane is clever, gentle, and attractive. Her voice rings true, melodious, and moving. When she has learned how best to utilise her many gifts, she will do excellent well in light emotional parts.

"MAN AND WOMAN."

A new and original comedy-drama, in four acts, by HENRY C. DE MILLE and DAVID BELASCO.

The fourth act re-written by MALCOLM WATSON.

First produced in London at the Opera Comique Theatre, on Saturday evening, March 25th, 1893.

Stephen Rodman ..	Mr. HENRY NEVILLE.	Sam. Delafield ..	Mr. SAM. SOTHERN.
Col. Zachary T. Kipp ..	Mr. H. STANDING.	Arnold Kirke ..	Mr. STANDLEY WARE.
Israel Cohen ..	Mr. ARTHUR ELWOOD.	Crawford ..	Mr. CECIL CROFT.
William Prescott ..	Mr. ARTHUR DACRE.	Roberts ..	Mr. OSCAR ASCHE.
Edward Seabury ..	Mr. W. T. LOVELL.	Cannon ..	Mr. E. MONSON.
Calvin Stedman ..	Mr. C. FULTON.	Mrs. Prescott ..	Miss M. TALBOT.
Lyman B. Webb ..	Mr. G. GODFREY.	Dora Prescott ..	Miss LENA ASHWELL.
Mr. Pendleton ..	Mr. SANT MATTHEWS.	Mrs. Delafield ..	Miss NANCY NOEL.
Mr. Reynolds ..	Mr. W. LAWRENCE.	Margery Knox ..	Miss EVA MOORE.
Mr. Bergman ..	Mr. E. H. KELLY.	Lincy ..	Miss A. CONSTANCE.
Mr. Wayne ..	Mr. A. WILMOT.	Agnes Rodman ..	Miss AMY ROSELLE.

William Prescott, bank cashier, purloins bonds to speculate with, this way being, he thinks, the royal road to fortune and his Agnes. Governor Rodman, Agnes' father, did the same thing twenty-five years ago, and sets William's conscience pricking badly by telling him the story. But William shirks confession. He lets suspicion light on his chum Seabury. He attends a midnight meeting of his directors, the bank's failure being imminent, and hears the innocent man charged, sees him arrested, without a quiver of remorse. When

however, the crisis is past, the directors have gone, the lamps are out, and Agnes steals into the moonlit room, and shows him that she has learned the truth, better late than never he takes a manlier course, and as Seabury is being led away in custody, makes mute confession by slipping on a handy pair of hand-cuffs, and thrusting his fettered wrists into a convenient ray of moonlight. For this tardy atonement he is treated in the handsomest way. The bank forgives him, Seabury's friendship is unshaken, one of the directors finds him a berth, and (a fellow feeling making him wondrous kind) Governor Rodman has such a Christian faith in penitent thieves that he blesses his union with Agnes. There is more than this in the story, but the rest is hardly worth the telling. Some of it is comedy—as doleful and mechanical as the musical-box out of which most of it is got. Some is melodrama—similarly stodgy and unenlivening. And all, comedy, melodrama, and what not, is set in a fearful and wonderful tangle of lingual weeds reminiscent of many a flowery-Bowery masterpiece. That, however, did not daunt the actors. Artificial the work might be, the methods they brought to play on it were actual, and their success was beyond a doubt. The bank directors' midnight meeting was as excellent a scene in its way as the three men scene in "Diplomacy," or the "Last Feast" in the "Dancing Girl." Something really was impending. A real catastrophe was in the air. This was the players' work in the first place, the dramatists' in the second only. Too heavy a hand, too theatrical a touch would have ruined all. But quite faultless were the tact and skill of Mr. Elwood, as the deeply concerned and dignified President, the passionate protestations of Mr. Lovell as the innocent suspect, the humour and feeling of a kindly old Pair-of-Spectacled director (Mr. Sant Matthews), and above all the grip and force of the iron-faced counsel to the bank, Mr. Fulton. Few actors could have equalled Mr. Fulton here. His air of pitiless resolution, the dominating strength conveyed in rigid look and changeless attitude, were altogether admirable, rivetting. Mr. Dacre did what he could to lend Prescott a manly air, but so paltry a hero ties—not to say handcuffs—an actor's hands. In the midnight act he was, however, finely strung. Miss Roselle again had a part unworthy of her. Just one brief scene, a rapid change from joy to misery, from trust to doubt, horror, agony—the gradations most artistically marked, and that was all. There is but one word for Mr. Neville as a convict who has wrought his life's atonement—that word is "majestic!" Miss Lena Ashwell, a dainty actress, with a quaint impulsive style that recalls the Miss Ellen Terry of the early seventies, was a gentle and sweet *ingénue*. And the third-rate humour was divided between Mr. Standing (as a bashful man, for once), Mr. Sam Sothern (as the familiar fool), and Miss Nancy Noel and Miss Eva Moore as a couple of very attractive eligible ladies, the first a widow, the second a maid

"UNCLE JOHN."

A new and original play, in three acts, by G. R. SIMS and CECIL RALEIGH.
First produced at the Vaudeville Theatre, on Monday evening, April 3rd, 1893.

John Bryce	Mr. CHARLES GROVES.	Olive Penarth	Miss NORREYS.
Charlie Bryce	Mr. H. REEVES-SMITH.	Polly Bryce	Miss ANNIE HUGHES.
Gus Doyle	Mr. DUNCAN FLEET.	Keziah Bryce	Miss SOPHIE LARKIN.
Bradford	Mr. JULIAN CROSS.	Mary	Miss LYDDIE EDMONDS.
Arthur Hastings	Mr. E. W. GARDINER.	Lady Meynel	Miss IRENE RICKARDS.
Johnston	Mr. JOHN BYRON.	Mrs. Hilborough	Miss G. ST. MAUR.
The Hon. Peter Penarth }	Mr. L. D'ORSAY.	Jane	Miss D. ENGLAND.

It is said that all geniuses are niggardly of their material. Mr. Gilbert writes ballads about punctilious captains and courtly sailor-

men, then works up the idea into "H.M.S. Pinafore." Mr. J. M. Barrie's masquerading barber appears at a "Window in Thrums," turns up again in "When a Man's Single," and nothing abashed does duty for a hero, and a capital hero, too, under the *nom de guerre* of "Walker, London." Dr. Conan Doyle will it is averred never kill Sherlock Holmes. Violent hands would be laid on Bret Harte if he tried to make away a second time (he did it once in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat") with that fascinating rascal Jack Hamlin. And so with all of them. Once get hold of a good idea, the wise thing to do is to work it, work it, work it. With repetition the public's appreciation of it will increase. (*Cf.*, the comedian's wheeze, the politician's epigram, &c.) Hence there was every reason to expect "Uncle John" to attain a fruity age, and to elect Mr. George R. Sims and Mr. Cecil Raleigh to a place among the immortals. For in their new and original (!!) play were any quantity of fine old seasoned drama and a situation which never failed to thrill the gallery and pit in the days of "Lights o' London. But the work shall speak for itself. Middle-aged "Uncle John," own brother to "Benjamin Goldfinch," though not the one hailing from Sheffield, marries a young wife whom he adores, and who when she has got over a penchant for a scamp, loves him deeply in return. Suddenly up turns the scamp again, no longer a scamp, but a member of the House of Lords; and a mysterious lady at this time arriving on Uncle John's estate, and Uncle John being seen at her cottage nursing a baby, the young wife promptly suspects the worst and embraces the peer and with him the "tooth for tooth" doctrine of revenge. The mysterious stranger is only the needy daughter of an old friend (and, this by-the-way, the deserted wife of the peer) but no questions are asked and no effort is made to clear up the mystery until Uncle John, acquainted with his wife's intention of elopement, hits on the "Lights o' London" trick and so contrives that the peer is caught in the act of running away with his own cloaked and hooded wife exactly one minute before complete reconciliation between Uncle John and his wife, and the fall of the curtain. All that the actors could do with this they did. Mr. Groves in particular worked like a good natured giant. Nothing more breezy has been seen for many a day than his rough-mannered big-hearted Yorkshireman. It was worthy of a place beside the Tykes of Mr. Sam. Emery, the Lancashire Lad of Mr. Henry Neville, or any of the rugged heroes of poor Charles Kelly. Miss Norreys with her exquisite sensibility almost made the heroine's conduct plausible. Mr. Gardiner in his somewhat brusque but not unimpressive way trod the border-line between scampishness and villainy. Mr. Reeves-Smith achieved a miracle and introduced a new kind of well-to-do loafer. Familiar humours were interpreted in familiar fashion by Miss Hughes and Miss Larkin. But for some reason or other, the old jokes, the old situations, missed fire. Even the discomfiture of the eloping peer was regarded with indifference. And if genius be disclosed in this daring *'rechauffé* of old material, genius for once, despite Mr. Grant Allen's pronouncement, has gone unrewarded.

"THE BLACK DOMINO."

A new and original drama, in five acts, by G. R. SIMS and ROBERT BUCHANAN.

First produced at the Adelphi Theatre on Saturday evening, April 1st, 1893.

Lord Dashwood	Mr. CHARLES GLENNEY.	Inspector of Police ..	Mr. HOWARD RUSSELL.
The Earl of Arlington ..	Mr. W. DENNIS.	Stokes	Mr. HARWOOD COOPER.
Captain Greville	Mr. W. L. ABINGDON.	The Bust of Homer ..	Mr. KERSLEY.
Pierre Berton	Mr. G. W. COCKBURN.	Parker	Mr. J. NORTHCOTE.
Chevenix Chase	Mr. WELTON DALE.	Reynolds	Mr. H. EDGEUMBE.
Dr. Maitland	Mr. T. B. THALBERG.	Mildred Vavasour ..	Miss EVELYN MILLARD.
Major O'Flaherty	Mr. JOHN LE HAY.	Clarice Berton	Mrs. P. CAMPBELL.
Jack Vavasour	Mr. C. M. HALLARD.	Rose Berton	Miss BESSIE HATTON.
Lord Drewcourt	Mr. R. C. STUART.	Mrs. Alabaster	Miss ETHEL HOPE.
Charlie Watts	Master H. BUSS.	Maid	Miss ADA ROGERS.
Joshua Honeybun	Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAMS.	Birdie Boston	Miss NITA CARLYON.
James Honeybun	Mr. W. NORTHCOTE.	Gussie Conyers	Miss S. BERRIDGE.
Old Gentleman	Mr. JOHN PHIPPS.	Granny Norbury ..	Miss G. CONWAY.
Sir George Johnson ..	Mr. SILVERTHORNE.	Dolly Chester	Miss CLARA JECKES.

Lord Dashwood has studied what George Meredith calls "The Wild Oats Theory" to advantage. He has played prodigal son, and eaten the husks, and now intends settling down with loving Mildred Vavasour to one long course of fatted calf. One oat, however springs full-blown from the earth, clad in sumptuous raiment, on his wedding morning. She is Clarice (*alias* Belle Hamilton) the seeming virtuous daughter of the French village organist. Despite this fact she would make a scene and proclaim Dashwood the libertine he is, but her father learns her secret, restrains her, and the wedded pair complete their triumphal march beneath the uplifted hunting crops of gentlemen in pink. Staid married life soon satisfies Dashwood, for in act ii. he is playing Samson to Belle's languorous Delilah. The liaison has plunged him into debt, and the only way out according to Captain Greville, his friend (and Mildred's rejected lover), is by forging his father's name, which he obligingly consents to do. He determines once more, however, to be off with the old love, and decides to do it in the presence of witnesses, in fact at a Covent Garden fancy-dress ball. Thither Mildred, primed by Greville, follows him, to gather sufficient evidence to satisfy a jealous wife, to fall insensible, and be conveyed by Greville to his rooms. Meantime Clarice encounters her stolen sister acting as flower-girl in the market, learns that Mildred has been Lady Bountiful to this child and her now blind father, and hastens to the rescue. Arrived at Greville's rooms she changes cloaks with the heroine, and when Dashwood comes to reproach Greville for his perfidy, shields her much as Mrs. Erlynne shielded Lady Windermere, or the showman the convict-hero of "The Lights o' London." Greville is now unmasked and receives a sound thrashing at the hands of Dashwood, who determines to suicide in the final scene—a lovely set of the Thames Valley as seen from the Star and Garter. But Belladonna Clarice is set upon the same end, clears him in the hearing of his forgiving wife, and takes morphia and dies—the forged bill trouble being concluded by the felonious purchase of the document by a wealthy friend. The acting was of the order known as popular. Mr. Abingdon as the villain was duly suave, cool, sinister. The comic money-lender of Mr. Arthur Williams was a playful usurer. The contemptible hero found salvation only through the vigour with which Mr. Glenney administered a drubbing to his quondam friend. Miss Hatton and Mr. Thalberg were the staunch, serious lovers. Mr. Dale and Miss Jecks, pitifully wasted upon a wretched part, the nagging comic ones. Mr. Cockburn as the blind organist was constrained to an over liberal use of the pathetic stop. Miss Millard had only to look pretty and winning. And Mrs. Campbell's sensitive talent was employed upon Clarice. Upon her the interest centred, though the character was vaguely drawn. The method of the actress compelled

attention, extorted admiration, and set one marvelling why the clever authors deliberately withheld from such an artist a study worthy of her quite exceptional powers.

"CLEVER ALICE."

A comedy, in three acts, adapted from the German of ADOLF WILLBRANDT, by BRANDON THOMAS.
First produced at the Royalty Theatre, Thursday evening, April 6th, 1893.

Gerald Douglas	Mr. C. CHARRINGTON.	Payne Williams	Mr. JOHN CARTER.
James Cook	Mr. H. FLEMING.	Lady Lilton	Mrs. T. WRIGHT.
Thomas Grace	Mr. W. R. STAVELEY.	Lady Altrood	Miss G. KINGSTON.
Corrington Selby	Mr. GILBERT TRENT.	Alice	Miss JANET ACHURCH.
Sir William Newgent ..	Mr. E. MAURICE.	Miss Grace	Miss IDA SALA.
Charles Verber	Mr. C. P. LITTLE.	Miss Lucy Grace ..	Miss H. LAWRENCE.
Claude Couraine	Mr. CHARLES ROCK.		

Adolf Willbrandt, the author of the comedy which Mr. Brandon Thomas has "Englished," does not leave his nationality for one moment in doubt. Anyone who has seen Mr. Augustin Daly's imported Teutonisms and Miss Ada Rehan as the artfully artless heroine of each and all, will at once recognise "Clever Alice" as the work of a German. From their childish spirit of fun, the delight taken by a set of Bohemian painters in exaggerating their attitude of dissent from the sober doctrines of a sober world, the insatiable desire to make believe (typified in the course of the piece by the whole company dressing up in fancy costume, for no reason in particular) down to the mere business of the scene—doing circus jumps through an execrable painting, toasting all and sundry in great mugs of beer, etc., etc.—it is appallingly unlike the real thing as we know it in England. That fact, however, does not deprive the piece of its capacity to amuse. Frankly face it as a mere bit of more or less maladroitness stage-work, and there is enjoyment of a kind to be had from witnessing it. True, the story is at one with the knife-grinder's. "Gawd bless yer, sir, there ain't none to tell." One of the velvet-coated, long-haired fellows falls in love with a very smart lady, who would certainly never tolerate his mode of dressing and living once she had married him, and is kindly assisted towards his goal by "Clever Alice," a female Bohemian in gig-lamps and draggled (possibly divided) skirts. Fine feathers make fine birds, however, and when dressing-up is the order of the day Clever Alice blossoms out into the prettiest of them all, which may be readily understood when it is said that she is none other than Miss Janet Achurch, looking her winsomest and fairest. Naturally the Bohemian hero, splendidly irregular in every respect, throws over what Lady Bellaston in the precise person of Miss Rose Leclercq called "the woman of fash-yon," and with the wedding bells ringing for Alice the "plot" and play are at an end. If, however, this be of woeful thinness, there is compensation of a kind in the acting, and in just one of the characters. Mr. Brandon Thomas has a rare eye for the eccentric, whether as actor or author. Witness "Charley's Aunt," the model Gloster in "A Commission," the yokel in "The Squire," the ass played by Mr. Little in "Marriage," etc. And here he cleverly employs the idea first worked by Mr. H. J. Byron (for Mr. Sothorn) in "A Crushed Tragedian." He makes a broken leading-man, reduced to the profession of sheriff's officer, dignify his calling by sowing Shakespearean quotations thick along the barren path he treads. The part was admirably played by Mr. John Carter, the chief Bohemian being Mr. Charrington who is surely ill-advised in attempting semi-sentimental light comedy, and the woman of fashion falling to dexterous Miss Kingston. Clever Alice was a *tour de force* for Miss Achurch, and a brilliant one as far as it went, but her genius is cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, within the narrow limits of stagey comedy.

"THE SILVER SHELL."

A new and original play, in four acts, by HENRY J. M. DAM.

First produced at the Avenue Theatre on Saturday evening, April 15th, 1893.

Gen. Prince Karatoff	Mr. KENDAL.	André	Mr. C. NORTON.
Sir Richard Stanhope	Mr. F. H. MACKLIN.	Vladimir	Mr. H. HOWARD.
M. Valdor	Mr. CECIL M. YORK.	Ivan Petrovitch	Mr. S. JERROM.
Mr. Banham (of Scotland Yard)	Mr. J. E. DODSON.	Adolf	Mr. H. DEANE.
Boris Ivanitch	Mr. OSCAR ADYE.	Ladislav	Mr. TEMPLE.
Paul Mouroff	Mr. EDMUND GRACE.	Lady Armitage	Miss ANNIE IRISH.
Herr Schmidt	Mr. G. P. HUNTLEY.	Mrs. Ladd	Miss F. BENNETT.
Vasil	Mr. HOWARD STURGE.	Mrs. Verney	Miss B. HUNTLEY.
Judge d'Instruction	Mr. GEORGE H. GRAY.	Lucille	Miss A. DAIROLLES.
Agent de Police	Mr. V. EVERARD.	Jack (aged 7)	Miss EMPSIE BOWMAN.
Constantin	Mr. A. FAUCET.	Katharine Vall	Mrs. KENDAL.

Romance is an excellent thing, but not altogether as Mr. Henry Dam conceives it. He is apt to confuse romance with the impossible—synonymous on the stage with the absurd. Thus he begins well enough with a Russian Minister of Police (a younger Demetrius of "The Red Lamp,") sworn to avenge the long-ago murder of his son on the (supposed) mistress who was his ruin, and resolved to defeat a conspiracy against the life of the Czar; but to get effective situations out of the design he plunges the *dramatis personæ* into a shoreless sea of ignorance, and by asking too much of our credulity renders his effects profoundly ineffectual. Although the Russian Criminal Bureau is what it notoriously is, acquainted with every wrinkle on each suspect's brow, Mr. Dam asks us to believe that the minister has not an inkling of what his son's betrayer was like, that a picked band of Nihilists has not the faintest conception of their arch enemy's personality or features, that his own daughter-law is in like case, and that therefore it is possible for this sleuth hound, Karatoff the "Butcher," to introduce himself into the conspiratorial circle by merely assuming the name of a notorious Nihilist (of whose personality his fellow plotters are also absolutely ignorant) and thus to get on level terms at once with the cunningest rebels in the universe! Not even in his sensation scene is Mr. Dam proof against temptation. Here he should have no difficulty in thrilling his audience by legitimate means, but some imp of mischief leads him absurdly astray, and turns the whole thing to farce. There is a midnight meeting of conspirators. Karatoff (as Boris Ivanitch) of course attends. The bomb intended for use upon the Czar is produced by its inventor, who exhibits first an empty model, then the loaded machine. Unseen Karatoff stealthily abstracts the latter and keeps it within reach. With every symptom of care and concern the empty shell is locked away in a cabinet, the inventor is dismissed, and the meeting proceeds. Suddenly a demand is made for admission. The new-comer is Boris Ivanitch, the very man Karatoff is passing for. Admitted he recognises the Minister and denounces him. The whole party advance to destroy the spy, but when he raises the bomb which they all believe to be an empty model, they cower before him until the police enter and arrest the gang! At the conclusion Karatoff discovers that his son's death was not due to the woman he has at last by accident hunted down—that she was Paul Karatoff's lawful wife, and that there is a son and heir. For the child's sake he pardons the Nihilism of the mother who exchanges her boy for freedom and a bluff burly English baronet, and all but the supremely unsuspicious conspirators live happily ever afterwards. Mrs. Kendal played the heroine with exquisite feeling and perfect sincerity, and Mr. Kendal threw all the authority he commands into his interesting study of the Minister and spy. But neither part is exactly suited to the temperament or style of its in-

terpreter. Mr. Macklin was as usual manly and strong. Miss Dairolles and Mr. Dodson were sacrificed upon some laboured "comic relief." Mr. York as a pallid traitor did surprisingly well. But the real success lay with two actors in very minor parts. The German bomb manufacturer of Mr. Huntley was a faultless piece of character acting. In its way quite a little gem. And Mr. Edward Grace as a travel-stained, prematurely aged convict from Siberia, contributed a most impressive figure to the great scene, which it should be said roused, on the first night, a demonstrative audience to actual enthusiasm.

"THE BABBLE SHOP."

A burlesque, in one act, by EDWARD ROSE.

First produced at the Trafalgar Square Theatre on Thursday evening, March 30th, 1893.

Lord Wyndhamere ..	Mr. A. PLAYFAIR.	The Duchess of Higham Kickers	Miss GRACE HUNTLEY.
Hugo Hilderbrand ..		The Duchess of Sou'-Westmorland	Miss LIZZIE RUGGLES.
Hengist De Sarum, Duke of Salop ..	Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.	The Duchess of North Belgravia ..	Miss ST. GEORGE.
Wireson ..	Mr. E. O'NEILL.	The Duchess of Mary-lebone ..	Miss LIZZIE WILSON.
Mr. Stodge ..	Mr. E. W. GARDEN.	2 2 2 2 ..	Miss HELEN LEYTON.
Caleb Plummer ..	Mr. J. WILLES.		
The Beadle ..	Mr. WENMAN.		
W. Sykes, Esq. ..	Mr. M. KINGHORNE.		

Given "The Bauble Shop" to parody, what might not have been expected of a humourist like Mr. Rose. At the best, a burlesque play, caricaturing the main features of the original, coherent, dramatic, interesting. At the worst, a medley of song and dance affording scope for a comedian like Mr. Charles Danby, or Mr. G. W. Anson, or Mr. Harry Randall, to amuse us, as the children say, out of their own heads. But it is always the unexpected that happens, and "The Babble Shop" is no exception to the rule. Mr. Rose shies at the best, shuns the worst, and attempts a compromise. The central idea of Lord Clivebrooke's introducing a bill is seized upon. Likewise the nocturnal visit to Jessie Keber, now a mammering doll. But travestied the bill becomes one for the compulsory adoption of Total Abstinence, and Stoach's grip is made to tighten at the discovery that the Leader of the Commons, after an intoxicating interview with the virtuous doll, has offered her a sip from his pocket pistol. The fact that she is, not in lady-novelist's metaphor, but literally, "a toy" serving to rout Stoach at the fall of the curtain. Unfortunately the travesty is long, Polonius and others might even urge "too long," and the idea to cover the ground is beaten out thin. Laughs were few, though chuckles were many, the latter not seldom due directly to the actors, and at the end there was prevalent a feeling of disappointment. For several things, however, the piece was to be seen. Two exquisite bits of mimicry were the Wyndhamere of Mr. Playfair and the Sarum of Mr. Maude. Mr. Wyndham's serious voice, tremulous and low, was reproduced to a miracle, and his lolling attitudes, the methodical pounding of the left arm, were caught most happily. As for Mr. Maude, his Mr. C. W. Somerset was capital fun. Mr. Somerset is devoted to his vowels. "It's a li-i-e," "My b-o-o-o-y," one can hear the mournful roll as one writes the word. This Mr. Maude was most happy in. It would have been hard to distinguish his voice from his model's. Mr. Garden danced a serpentine dance almost as funnily as Little Tich in the Drury Lane pantomime. Mr. Willes was uncommonly effective as the dipsomaniacal inventor who always speaks in a whisper—"because it's so effective." Mr. Kinghorne as a coster (a long way) after Mr. Chevalier, danced as lightly as a feather. And Miss Huntley and Miss Leyton did little or nothing with customary *chic* and prettiness. The burlesque was perhaps in addition to being thin, a little too careful of susceptibilities. Spice makes better flavouring than soap.

Some Amateur Performances.

"HARVEST" BY THE BANCROFT A.D.C.

Why, oh, why were the Bancroft so fatally conscientious! This may seem a novel complaint to bring against the amateur, but prithee bear with me a moment whilst I discourse concerning his perversity. If it be Pinero or Grundy that he has taken unto himself for better or worse, he will miss out speech after speech—nay, in his bungling, I have known him omit an entire scene. But let him take "Harvest," for instance, where every soul in the play not only sees sermons in stones, but insists upon delivering them *in extenso*, not a "cut" is made—and alack the day, not even a cue missed! How one yearned for someone with a "robust conscience" (and a heart for a suffering audience), to cleave his way through the play, chopping out pages of trite reflections, which would be more profitably employed as copy-book head-lines. How one welcomed with almost tearful gratitude the announcement of the cynic (!) that he would step outside and do his moralising! But everyone was word perfect, and I am therefore reduced to judging them on their merits. These were considerable, for the Bancroft have set themselves to prove that a club, like a newspaper, is not to be estimated from its first issue—since both, for some inscrutable reason, invariably go to press unprepared. And in their second performance, they proved their case to demonstration. If the play was not always on the move, it was not the fault of the actors, for, once they had ploughed their way through the mass of verbiage obstructing the action and got to business, there were few of the situations which were not well and firmly gripped. Brenda Musgrave is outside the range of any amateur, no matter what her experience and enthusiasm. That being clearly understood, there was much that called for praise in Mrs. Evans' version. Her quieter movements were profoundly affecting, and for the rest, if she lacked something in force, she was always impressive, and always in deadly earnest. Mr. Dawson Milward had almost as difficult a task, striving to reconcile innumerable inconsistencies. With unswerving fidelity he realised the selfish brutality of the egoist, and, putting a backbone into the man's flabby penitence, won for him a degree of sympathy, the entire credit of which he may quite fairly pocket. Miss Chester does not look the girlish heroine, but she understands how to play her, and Mr. Walther put life and colour and manliness into the boyish lover. There wasn't a dull moment so long as Miss Gurney and Mr. Walton were on the stage. But then they had no moralising to do! Miss Graham and Mr. Brown had nothing else, but they did their best to make it as unobjectionable as possible. Mr. Cahill, who rarely does ought but succeed, played Hamish to perfection; had there been a double allowance of his canny Scot, no one had grumbled. Master St. Lawrence gave evidence of careful teaching. "A Regular Fix" was the *hors d'œuvre*, in which Mr. Rowse came out far ahead of his companions. Mr. Lewin Mannering as Hugh de Brass kept the laugh going. Mrs. Winckley looked her part, and didn't play it. With Mrs. Hirsch, it was "contrariwise" as Tweedledee would say, and in conclusion, Miss Nance Oldfield did little to uphold the dignity of her name.

"YOUNG MRS. WINTHROP" BY THE ANOMALIES.

How is it that amateur acting doesn't make more of an impression upon one's memory? What if, at the close of the season, one were subjected to a categorical examination upon the amateur "events" of the year! It is a nightmare thought—to be dismissed as speedily as possible. The efforts of nine-tenths of the amateurs come out upon the plate of your memory—like the early attempts of the amateur photographer,—blurred, indistinct, chaotic, and in time, pass from it as though they had never been. In the case of the small remainder—that bare tenth—there may be much that is faulty, much that is

inartistic, but at least they possess one merit. Their work is distinct and vivid. It's warranted to wear. Test it six months hence, and you will find it stands out in your memory, clear cut and firm as at the first. Take Mr. Marshall, for instance, as vigorous an actor as any to be found in the amateur ranks. Like the guileless Phanor, he has his little faults, but they lie for the most part on the surface; and when against them one sets this ability to breathe the breath of life into a character, lo, they count as nothing. It makes no difference whether the part suits him or whether it doesn't—and, to be frank, his choice is not always marked by the nicest discrimination. But even in failure he will command your attention. There will be something which will carve itself a niche in your memory. Not that Douglas Winthrop is, or should be, forbidden fruit to him. Most of it is now well within his range. He was always equal to the earlier scenes, and when it comes to the stronger ones, the moments when he is overweighted are few and far between. Outside Mr. Marshall there was no particular reason for enshrining the production in one's heart of hearts. It was well up to amateur high-water mark, of course. The *Anomalies'* performances are always that, but there was nothing calling for special note. Mrs. Ernest Renton was natural and touching, and if she was a little apt to substitute tearfulness for strength, well, the audience had no fault to find with it. Miss Violet Bernheim won all hearts by her sweet and sympathetic rendering of the blind girl, and if Mr. Milton Cooper, as her lover, left something to be desired, it wasn't enough to interfere seriously with anyone's comfort. Mrs. Pryce Hamer, and Mr. Egerton Heald did the fullest justice to the wealth of witty lines allotted to the Chetwyses. Miss Ethel Van Praagh was tender as the loveable old lady, but Buxton Scott went for very nearly next to nothing, and that was the one weak spot at all noticeable.

"TRIPLE BILL" BY THE CLAPHAM STROLLERS.

Not to confess to a hopeless passion for that elegant creature, George Frederick Austin, was to confess yourself altogether behind the times for Miss Forster and her contemporaries, and not to give the Triple Bill a turn is, amongst amateurs just now, to confess yourself not up to date in matters theatrical. And if there is one thing upon which the Clapham Strollers pride themselves—with justice, moreover—it is upon being up to date. So up they came with their Triple Bill, bent upon proving to the world in general that they knew how to do the thing. And they did. Their last performance proved to be one of those occasions which Gama the growler would have found tedious to distraction, for "all was right and nothing went wrong." The Strollers have the eye of an eagle for a novelty, and no sooner did they find that "Mrs. Hilary Regrets" was to be had for the asking—or what Mr. French would consider its equivalent—than up they hurried, resolved that they, and they alone, would have the right to inscribe the magic words "for the first time by amateurs" under its title. Miss Ellie Chester—making the most dangerously fascinating of little widows—and Mr. Capper, as the Oirish medico—active and energetic as Mr. Wyndham himself—removed all sting from the memory of a scamped dinner. And some would have forfeited their dinner outright and recked nothing of it for the sake of what came next. Mr. Jerome's "Fennel" is never anything but welcome, but doubly so when it comes with everyone in his right place. Over Mr. Marshall's moving picture of Filippo, the genius with the twisted body, many an eye grew moist and red—and that was a welcome sight, for it proved that not only was all right with the play, but the audience ailed nothing, and there was no pressing need to reckon seriously with Mr. Besant's statement that our tears and laughter are gradually running dry at the fount. Mr. Walther supplied youth and brightness and an air of picturesqueness—everything that goes to make up the contrast in handsome, straight-limbed Sandro—but some of his best moments were spoiled by that self-consciousness which has been growing on him of late and ruined some of his best work. I would urge him to fling it aside whilst there is yet time. Mr. Cahill got a wealth of humour out of old Taddeo—as he ought: and Miss Emily Arnold displayed a pretty, child-like winsomeness, which is all that we insist upon, if not quite all that we look for, from Giannina. "Crazed" swept Mr. Morton Henry, Mr. Philip Deane, and Miss Lankester along on a flood of laughter which reduced the audience to a condition closely bordering on the title of Mr. Phillips' ab-urdity, and sent them home confirmed in the opinion that the Triple Bill was *the* discovery of the century.

"THE PALACE OF TRUTH" BY THE ROMANY CLUB.

Merciless poetic justice has been meted out to Mr. Gilbert by the Romany. "You shall have your play exactly as it is set down" said these stern censors, in effect. "You have chosen to concoct a hopeless jumble of poetry and farce—So be it! Your poetry shall be given in as exquisitely poetical a spirit as that in which you dreamed it. And for your farce—it shall be farce. There shall be no mistake on that point. You shall be played for exactly what you are worth. Upon this occasion we shall not be *plus royaliste que le roi*. We will furnish no cloak for your faults. You have chosen to bind together for better for worse what is wide asunder as the poles, and, to quote Colonel Lukyn, 'By jove, Sir, you shall have the consequences of it where you stand!' And they carried out their programme to the letter, in as rigid, unflinching a fashion as though they had been lineal descendants of the stony-hearted tribunal of the Inquisition. As the poet puts it, "Now we were up-up-up, and now we were down-down-down." Now, thanks to the Misses Webster, we were soaring aloft, poised on the pinions of poetry, and now, bang went the poetry, and sides were splitting over the farcical drollery of Mr. Trollope and Miss Henderson. As a whole, the performance partook of the violent delights of the switchback railway. I have spoken of the Misses Webster, but I have not spoken sufficiently. Miss Lizzie Webster was true and sweet as Zeolide. She made her what she should be—a noble woman, not what she usually is—an inanimate block with water instead of blood in her veins—a figure almost as irritatingly colourless as that of Mrs. Solness. And Miss Annie Webster, as Mirza, played throughout with power, and threw into her closing scene a passionate intensity which fairly thrilled the audience. Miss McIntosh made a dainty little Azéma. Mr. Montgomerie is not the ideal Philamir—if one can talk of the ideal in connection with so unideal a prince—but he passes for him fairly well. Mr. Birch Reynardson was a capital Chrysal, and nothing but praise attaches to Mr. Tulloh and Mr. Sowton. But if a budding Gilbert lurked amongst that audience at St. George's Hall I am certain he went home and pondered many things in his heart.

TRIPLE BILL AT ST. GEORGE'S HALL.

"In Honour Bound," "Our Bitterest Foe," and "Pity" formed the programme. It sounds well, doesn't it? Capital little plays all three of them, strong, and like Pears' Soap, warranted to give satisfaction. Not an over wise selection for a triple bill nevertheless. Following in the footsteps of old Betteredge, I "turn up" my favourite poet and what do I find written where all who run may read? "Variety's the very spice of the triple bill, that gives it all its flavour." The audience which comes prepared for this form of amusement, wants its emotion in homœopathic doses. Moreover it wants to be everything by turns and nothing long. With Hilda Wangel, it is thirsting to be thrilled, to be moved—now to tears, and anon to wild, unreasoning laughter. And the latter appetite had not been catered for. All grounds of complaint however should have been exhausted with this drawback. But were they? Alack! "Not much of a play that—so tame and stupid!" observed my neighbour as the curtain rang down upon Grundy's little drama. He had paid it the tribute of conscientious attention, and that was his candid verdict. "Seen it before?" I enquired. "No," he replied, and "wondering looked at me." Would anyone save a critic or possibly a lunatic at large, be found sitting through a play of this description twice, was the thought clearly uppermost in his mind. "In Honour Bound" tame and stupid! Though I spoke with the tongues of men and of angels, could any words of mine prove half so eloquent a comment. No, not upon the man's intellect, as by your smiling you would seem to say. His criticism was true if not discriminating. The play was dull—deadly dull, dull as no one who had seen it receive even the rendering known—not improbably by courtesy alone—as "intelligent," would have believed it possible to be. "Lord, we know what a play is, but we know not what it may be," says the fair Ophelia—or something very like it—and how her words struck home, as one sat watching the meaning "softly and silently vanish away" from a play teeming with humanity and instinct with interest in every line. After darkness, dawn—absolute dawn, not the feeble glimmering light that shows up strongly from mere force of contrast with the previous gloom. In Mr. Gardner's powerful

little drama, all things worked together for good. Mr. Seymour Hughes repressing with a firm hand the emotional, and bringing well to the fore the rugged and cynical side of the old warrior, presented a consistent piece of work. Just one note of tenderness was the one thing needful to make it eminently truthful. Mr. Mackay attacked Henri's scenes with energy and resolution, and drew a sufficiently moving picture of the dazed and wounded lover, and Mrs. Herbert Morris, simple, girlish and unaffected, found little to baffle her in Blanch. And matters were no less satisfactory when it came to Shirley's version of "The Ballad Monger." Mr Mackay is poetical and graceful, and understands the meaning of fervour, therefore Gringoire does not spell for him the unattainable. I have a perfect recollection of Mr. Tree as the people's poet, and I can yet find words to praise this clever young amateur. Mrs. Herbert Morris was all she need be as the heroine, gentle and sweet and touching. A mixture of cynicism and superciliousness helped Mr. Hughes out with the vindictive barber. Mr Skilbeck with scarcely enough dignity for even so eccentric a monarch as Louis, revealed a fund of grim humour, and Miss Pollard and Mr. Liddell showed that they had caught the spirit of the play. So the latter portion of that Triple Bill went far to atone for the shortcomings of the earlier.

EDGBASTON ASSEMBLY ROOMS, BIRMINGHAM.

When the theatrical historian wrote, "That pleasing product of the drama, the amateur in all his glory, arose in the reign of the Crookback, and to the gentlemen of the Inns of Court belongs the honour of inaugurating the long series of amateur performances which have so often given amusement (*sic*) to long-suffering audiences," he little thought of the artistic finish with which many of these entertainments are nowadays distinguished. The amateur actors of to-day and of twenty years ago are different beings, and in the march forward that has been made, Birmingham has not lagged behind. Ample proof of this was given on April 14th and 15th when, in aid of the funds of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, performances were given by a picked band of local amateurs of James Albery's charming comedy, "Two Roses." To make these representations artistically as well as financially successful no pains had been spared, and with characteristic generosity Mr. Henry Irving, who is always ready to encourage intelligent effort in the right direction, had placed the Lyceum prompt book at the disposal of the performers. Mr. Whitworth Wallis, who as a lecturer is well-known all England over, essayed the exacting character of the alternately servile and purse-proud Digby Grant and secured a well won success. The impersonation bore evidence of thoughtful study, and his by-play and business were as good as his appreciative delivery of the lines. It was in every way an admirably conceived and well finished portrait. Equally good was the Caleb Deecie of Mr. Guy Pritchard. The assumption of blindness was remarkably well sustained, and the light heart, overcoming affliction, was depicted in a manner at once graceful and winsome. As Jack Wyatt, Mr. Lee Mathews played with consummate ease, and a notable hit was made by Mr. H. Monckton in the small part of Mr. Furnival. The worst point in the cast was the Our Mr. Jenkins of Mr. W. N. Phelps. If this gentleman understood the humour of the delightfully funny things allotted to him, he failed to convey it to the audience. Laughter no doubt was created amongst the young folk present by his noisy and exaggerated methods, but the subtlety of the character was wholly missing. Miss Lloyd-Owen and Miss Edith Blakemore looked very charming and played very intelligently as Lotty and Ida, and Miss Lucy Mathews and Miss D. Dixon did excellent service as Our Mrs. Jenkins and Mrs. Cups. To the careful stage-mangement of Mr. A. B. Chamberlain much of the success gained was due.



Musical Notes.

THE month of April is generally a very quiet one in the musical world—being just between the winter and summer seasons—and so far as the concert platform is concerned, there is little to record of any note. Musical interest has been chiefly centred in the opera season at Drury Lane, and in one or two productions at the theatres. With regard to the former, it is worthy of note that Sir Augustus Harris has not been content to rely solely on what is known as English opera, but has alternated such works as “*Maritana*” and “*The Bohemian Girl*” with “*Lohengrin*,” and other heavy operas. In addition to this he has revived a work which has not been heard in this country for forty years. The company engaged, has of necessity, been a very mixed one, but it is a pleasing task to record, not only the sound conscientious work, but steady improvement of more than one English artist, notably Miss Esther Palliser, who is coming to the front very rapidly indeed. Mr. Ben Davies essayed the part of Don Cæsar in “*Maritana*” on two occasions, singing and acting with splendid effect. Would that all operatic tenors could act like our popular English artist.

“LA JUIVE.”

Revived at Drury Lane Theatre. April 11th, 1893.

Eleazaro	Signor GIANNINI.	Alberto	Signor CARACCILO.
Il Cardinale	M. CASTELMARY.	Araldo	Signor CERNUSCO.
Il Principe Leopoldo	Signor GUETARY.	La Principessa Endossia	Mdlle. DAGMAR.
Ruggero	Signor DE VASCETTI.	Rachele	Mdlle. GHERLSEN.

This opera is without doubt Halévy's masterpiece. It was originally produced in Paris in 1835, and was performed for the first time in England at Drury Lane by a Brussels troupe in 1846. Five years later it was produced at Covent Garden, and strange to say, from that day to this no performance of the work has taken place in London, though the late Mr. Carl Rosa produced it at Belfast in 1888, with Mr. McGuckin, Mr. Mannors, and Miss Fanny Moody in the cast. The same subject has been used, however, for a play, adapted by W. T. Moncrieff, and entitled, “*The Jewess*”; it was produced at the old Victoria Theatre in 1835. It seems strange that so beautiful and melodious an opera as “*La Juive*” should not have been heard for so many years. The plot is distinctly dramatic, and the story extremely interesting. The period is 1414, when a Jewess who loved a Christian, or a Christian who loved a Jewess, was doomed to a death of the most horrible description. Halévy's music is exceedingly fine throughout, the love passages teeming with delightful melody, while the more dramatic parts of the opera are utilised with splendid effect. Sir Augustus Harris has deserved well of all lovers of good music in reviving the work, and it is to be hoped we shall hear it again at Covent Garden during the coming season. Signor Giannini played the Jew with considerable pathos and power, and in his great solo was recalled three times. A striking feature of the performance was the Cardinal of M. Castelmarty, while Mdlle. Gherlsen

created a good impression as Rachele, though a correct estimate of this artist's powers must be left for a future occasion, for she was evidently suffering from a severe cold. The opera was magnificently staged.

"MOROCCO BOUND."

A musical farcical comedy in two acts.

Libretto by ARTHUR BRANSCOMBE, lyrics by ADRIAN ROSS.

Music by F. OSMOND CARR.

First produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, April 13th, 1893.

Spoofah Bey	Mr. J. L. SHINE.	Hon. E. Sportington	Miss V. CAMERON.
Squire Higgins	Mr. CHARLES DANBY.	Hon. M. Sportington	Miss LETTY LIND.
Josiah Higgins	Mr. H. SPARLING.	Lady Walkover	Miss A. HEWITT.
Vivian	Mr. S. BARRACLOUGH.	Comtesse de la Blague	Miss J. MCNULTY.
Dolly	Mr. A. C. SEYMOUR.	Eva Sketchley	Miss E. WESTLAKE.
Musket	Mr. D. MUNRO.	Rhea Porter	Miss M. STUDDOLME.
Sid Fakah	Mr. C. COOP.	Nina Featherstone	Miss RUBY TEMPLE.
Lord Percy Pimpleton	Mr. G. GROSSMITH, jun.	Hilda Adlette	Miss Y. WEYMER.

A new class of entertainment has sprung up in our midst, namely, farcical comedy set to music. It began with "Miss Decima," then followed "In Town," and now we have "Morocco Bound." In America this class of piece is all the rage, and it is likely to become equally popular in this country. No real plot is required in a piece of this kind, the main object is to gain a hearty laugh by means of bright catchy music, pretty dresses, comic business, and really funny acting. In "Morocco Bound" we have all this, in fact there are too many plums, and it is one of the merriest productions we have had for a long time. All the piece requires is a little judicious pruning, and "Morocco Bound" should then have a long and brilliant career. It is not necessary to detail the slender plot, for the whole performance is practically an admirable variety show. One of the most artistic things in the piece was a brilliant caricature by Miss Letty Lind of the skirt-dance, as performed by fashionable amateurs. "Morocco Bound" is splendidly cast, the principal honours of the evening being carried off by Mr. Charles Danby, Mr. J. L. Shine, Miss Letty Lind, and Miss Violet Cameron. The music, grave and gay, is in the composer's best style; a rollicking Irish song, entitled, "Home Rule," (Mr. J. L. Shine), fairly bringing down the house. The piece is beautifully staged and dressed; in the first scene being a miniature pond on which real swans and ducks disport themselves.

THE new version of the "Magic Opal," now rechristened the "Magic Ring," was produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre on April 11th, but the piece cannot be considered to be much improved. The music of Senor Albeniz, is really excellent throughout, the whole score being musicianly and artistic in the extreme, but good music alone will not make the success of a comic opera, and the book of the "Magic Ring" is still lamentably weak, though it has been carefully revised. I cannot consider either that the reconstruction of the piece, so far as the cast is concerned, strengthens it very much. Mr. Norman Salmond is of course a great acquisition, and his magnificent voice is heard to great advantage, but the tenor part (sung before by Mr. John Child) has been cut down very considerably, and there is no place now for Miss May Yohe who at the Lyric Theatre created so favourable an impression. Miss Marie Halton—the new *prima donna*—does not, in my opinion, compare at all well with Miss Aida Jenoure.

AT the Crystal Palace on April 15th, a splendid performance of Berlioz's "Faust" was given on the concert platform. Miss

Macintyre, Mr. Ben Davies, Mr. Henschel, and Mr. Grice made a grand quartette, and though the choruses were not quite up to the mark, the orchestra under Mr. Manns played in fine style.—A promising young pianist, Miss A. V. Muhle, gave a concert at St. Martin's Town Hall on April 14th, assisted by Mrs. Huxhel and other artists. Miss Muhle made a marked impression in Mendelssohn's "Variations Serieuses."

THE concert organised by Madame Giulia Valda, in aid of the fund for relieving the poor who suffered through the Sandgate landslip disaster, took place in St. James' Hall on April 20th. It is to be hoped a good amount was raised, but the hall was only half full. Several disappointments, too (very unwisely kept back till the last moment) were in store for the audience, for Madame Valda herself was unable to sing through indisposition, and Mr. Dufrique and Miss Palliser also did not appear, the latter's place however being taken by Miss Marie Duma. The success of the afternoon was gained by Mr. Ben Davies, who sang Tosti's "My Dreams," and, for an enthusiastic *encore*, gave a superb rendering of Blumenthal's "Evening Song."

THE coming musical season will be a busy one. Opera at Covent Garden starts on the 16th, and in addition to this, Sir A. Harris has arranged for a series of operatic concerts at St. James's Hall. Great interest will be centred in the new Savoy opera, which, by the way, deals with hypnotism, for great things are expected of Mr. Ford's music.

PERCY NOTCUTT.



Notes of the Month.

THE past month has practically been given over to the dust and noise of dissentient Ibsenites and Anti-Ibsenites. "The Master Builder" has caused a serious split in the camp of the faithful, and it has been left for Mr. H. W. Massingham to take up the cudgels on its behalf as an epoch-making drama. Daily papers have done well out of the discussion. Even in *The Star* anonymous correspondents have turned and rent their apostate "Spectator," while assuring Mr. Walkley that his no-play-at-any-price attitude towards this drama may do excellently well from the standpoint of the impressionist and professional critic, but contributes nothing to the question whether or no the work "has its roots in human tragedy." For many it is asserted that "The Master Builder" lays hold of fibres that have never before been touched with such manifest intention, and takes rank as the keenest thing of its kind since George Meredith's "Egoist."

MR. WALKLEY's lead is followed by Mr. J. H. McCarthy. In his "Pages on Plays" in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the chatty chronicler with unusual decision cuts himself adrift from the cause, and renounces the doctrine of infallibility. "A Doll's House" he considers a masterpiece. "Hedda Gabler" is also a masterpiece. But these facts he considers are nothing to the point in considering "The Master Builder's" claim to be regarded in the same light. "Ibsen is a great man," says Mr. McCarthy, "he is the greatest dramatist of his age, but a great man can blunder, and this great man has blundered!" Doubtless to open up a new channel for this turbulent torrent of discussion, for otherwise one fails to see a reason for the remark, Mr. McCarthy denounces Mrs. Solness, because she mourned her nine lovely dolls and was reconciled to the death of her babies, as a "loathsome" old woman!

So excellent a subject for debate was not likely to escape the attention of the Playgoers' Club, to whom Dr. Aveling delivered a lecture on Sunday, April 9th. He admitted that Ibsen's latest play from both the literary and the dramatic standpoint was not so powerful as many of its predecessors, and that it contained far too generous an allowance of talk; but he contended that the drama showed extraordinary observation of our present society and its individual components. Solness he regarded as a picture of the ordinary capitalist, and Ibsen's pessimism he thought was due to his having not yet embraced Socialism. Had the great reformer been a Socialist, we should have had nothing from him but optimism, for hope springs eternal in the human breast that looks for the eventual demolition of the present social system and the building of a nobler structure on its ruins. The cleverest point in the discourse, which was throughout an able, thoughtful, and eloquent piece of work, was a parallel drawn between Ibsen's literary career, and that of the century. First stood the Romanticists—Scott, Byron, Victor Hugo.

To the corresponding Ibsen period belonged "Peer Gynt." Then we had the "middle-class" work of Dickens and Thackeray—to be compared with "The Pillars of Society." Last, came the Fantastics—the *Fin de Siècle* School—the Verlaines, Oscar Wilde, Olive Schreiners, Maurice Maeterlincks—and in "The Master Builder" the lecturer found Ibsen the Decadent.

MR. HERBERT WARING, in unassuming fashion, gave his views of Solness, which, from the fact that he had enjoyed peculiar facilities for getting at the true inwardness of the perplexed and perplexing hypnotist, were listened to with deep attention. Mrs. Frankau, the authoress of "Dr. Phillips" and "A Babe in Bohemia," novels as clever as they are repellent, which is saying much, spoke with power and point. Various dramatists also carried on the debate, Mr. Cecil Raleigh, Mr. Edward Rose, and Mr. Hurst, among the number. But although every other speaker was a hot partisan, the exchange of blows did not become exciting, until Mrs. Eleanor Marx Aveling undertook to repel a smart attack upon the lecturer by Mr. W. C. K. Wilde, whose utter discomfiture and moral rout proved the most interesting event of the evening.

BUT this unofficial prolongation of what is called "the Ibsen boom," extensive as it is, pales before the latest scheme of sympathisers with the growing movement for the unconventional. A committee has been formed with a view to organising a series of subscription performances, to be given during June, of "Brand," "Hedda Gabler," "The Lady from the Sea," "Rosmersholm," and "The Master Builder." Mrs. J. R. Green and Sir Frederick Pollock have been appointed trustees, and already among those who have hastened to become subscribers are Mr. Asquith (the Home Secretary), Mr. Oscar Wilde, Mr. Oswald Crawford, Sir Edward Grey, and several other prominent politicians and literary men.

THE moment in favour of liberty of expression in dramatic art, of freedom from the shackles of convention, has extended to the other side of the Atlantic. Regarded in this country as the Texas of the literary wastrel, a place where the worst criminals against art may thrive secure from justice, the States it seems can harbour revolutionaries and idealists as ardent as our own. Foremost among them are Mr. Frank Stockton, Mr. Harding Davis, Mr. Brander Matthews, and Mr. Clyde Fitch, whose productions have lately seen the light at Boston in connection with the American Théâtre Libre, the Theatre of Arts and Letters. Little headway has been made so far. Indeed of five plays produced, but two have met with any favour. Mr. Stockton's "Squirrel Inn" is dismissed as a mildly interesting entertainment. "The Other Woman," adapted from Mr. Davis's powerful story of the same name, an excellent example of the force and eloquence with which the chronicler of Van Bibber's deeds of dudish chivalry can write, altogether missed fire. Its characters it is reported just "sit around and talk." As a stage play it is the worst kind of failure; and "there is no mistaking the meaning of the grave-like silence with which 'The Other Woman' was received." Mr. John Harrison's "Hal o' the Hall"—curiously suggestive of Mr. Louis Stevenson's exquisite allegory, "Will o' the Mill"—comes in for still plainer speaking. A puerile play in blank verse, a story of archaic simplicity, having its prototype in "The Heir of Lynne"; weak and vapid as drama and as literature—these are some of the

hurtful pellets flung point blank at its author's head. Very different, however, was the reception accorded the remaining two.

MR. BRANDER MATTHEWS' work, "The Decision of the Court," deals with the matrimonial differences of a woman of quick wit and a man who would perhaps come into Mark Twain's category as chuckle-headed. The Courts have pronounced a decree of Divorce, but a discussion of their own grievances leads them to set aside the decision by mutual consent. This play it is pointed out stultifies the arguments of the reformers who produced it. Its effect is got by a careful observation of the conventions which are said to be worthless. It uses all the best methods of the conventional stage. "By playing it 'The Theatre of Arts and Letters' has merely raised itself to the level of that plane of art which it claims to be far above."

To Mr. Clyde Fitch, known here as the hapless author of the unspeakable "Pamela's Prodigy," belongs the one unqualified success. "The Harvest" is the name of his play. Its plot is not given in detail, but from the fact "that average sensibilities are shocked by its audacity," "there are lines and elements of questionable taste," "and it is a powerful exposition of a theme not usually talked of in mixed company," it is easy to guess its general tenour, and safe perhaps to recommend it to the notice of Independents on this side.

By some critics it is spoken of as "a great work," a play with "a grand moral," and "in reality a powerful sermon," while one does not hesitate to say that "it is certainly the equal if not the superior of any piece of dramatic writing that this country has produced." After this there should be no difficulty in getting another hearing for Mr. Clyde Fitch in London, since Mr. Bronson Howard, his implied inferior, commands a ready market anywhere in England.

TWO of the three ladies who form our photographic group of "The Amazons" are well known to all playgoers. Miss Ellaline Terriss and Miss Lily Hanbury have from the beginning of their career been identified with the London Stage. Miss Terriss appeared first at the Criterion and the Princess's, where she immediately sprang into public favour as the winsomest conceivable Arrah-na-Pogue. After a useful course of melodrama, she joined the Court company, played in "The Pantomime Rehearsal," "Faithful James" and "The Guardsman," appeared as the heroine of Mr. Brandon Thomas's witty comedy "Marriage," and is now engaged upon the Lady Wilhelmina Belturbet, in Mr. Pinero's brilliant farce. Miss Hanbury has enjoyed few opportunities worthy of her talent. With Mr. Wilson Barrett she played only minor parts, but under Mr. Alexander she appeared as the heroine of "Lady Windermere's Fan." In this and in the *matinée* drama called "Lady Browne's Diary," Miss Hanbury acted with striking power and sincerity. The impression thus made was deepened in the course of a provincial town with Mr. Tree, during which she played all the leading parts associated in town with her cousin, Miss Julia Neilson, and on her return Mr. Pinero promptly secured her services for the Lady Noline, whose stately disdain she endues with exquisite charm. Miss Pattie Browne, the horsey Lady Thomasin, hails from Australia where she enjoys an enviable and obviously well-earned reputation for dash and humour.

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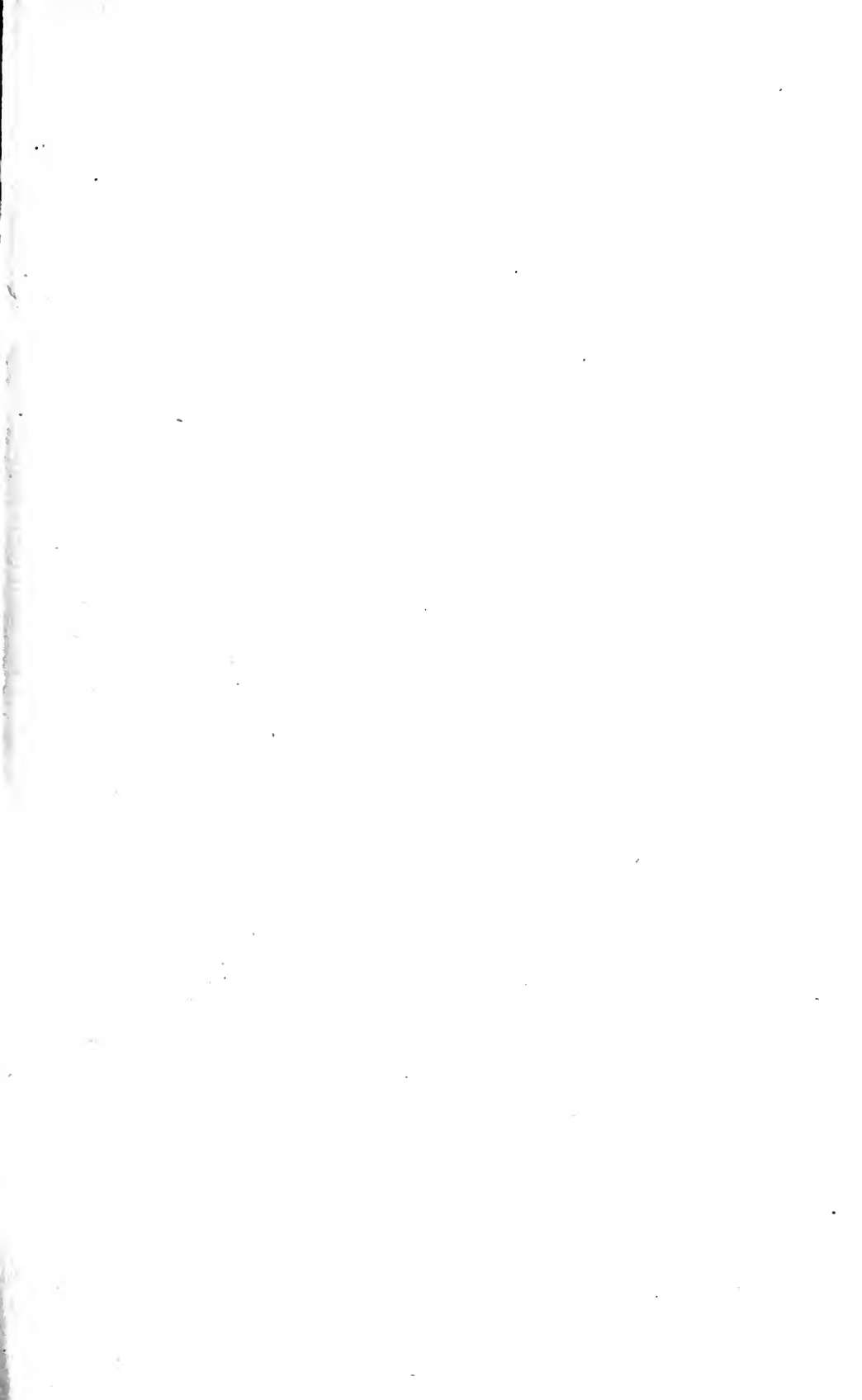
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MISS ELLALINE TERRISS, MISS LILY HANBURY, AND
MISS PATTIE BROWNE,
IN "THE AMAZONS."

"Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of three—brothers (?) "

HAMLET. Act III., Sc. 4 (adapted).





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MR. BEN WEBSTER.

"I like people to ask me how I am—it shows a wide-spread interest in my health."

—"CECIL GRAHAM" ("Lady Windermere's Fan").

MR. BEN WEBSTER, the subject of our second portrait, for years acted with the Irving A.D.C., of whom he was a pillar and a mainstay, and after a season with Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, and another with Mr. Edouin, very appropriately joined Mr. Irving, to play Malcolm in "Macbeth," and so passed into the company of Mr. Alexander, with whom he has been since the beginning of that gentleman's career as manager. In "Dr. Bill," "Sunlight and Shadow," and "Lord Anerley," the familiar light comedy lover fell to his lot, but Cecil Graham, the well-groomed Society loafer in "Lady Windermere's Fan," fortunately threw him off this tedious track, and in Mr. Carton's gingerly-handled "Liberty Hall," he plays a neutral-tinted thoughtless youth, who in heavier-scored drama would be something very like a villain.



New Plays

PRODUCED AND IMPORTANT REVIVALS in London, from March 14th, 1893 to April 19th, 1893 :—

(*Revivals are marked thus °*)

- Mar. 20° "A Yorkshire Lass," drama, in four acts, by Wilton Jones. Surrey.
 „ 20° "Faust Up to Date," burlesque, in two acts, by Geo. R. Sims and H. Pettitt. Grand.
 „ 20° "The Good Old 'Times," drama, in four acts, by Hall Caine and Wilson Barrett. Britannia.
 „ 22 "Dinner for Two," a duologue, in one act, by R. C. Carton. Placed in evening bill. Trafalgar Square.
 „ 22 "The Substitute," comediotta, by Malcolm Bell. Steinway Hall.
 „ 23° "The Fool's Revenge," drama, by the late Tom Taylor. Trafalgar Square.
 „ 24 "Mr. Jericho," operetta, by Henry Greenbank, music by Ernest Ford. Savoy.
 „ 25 "Man and Woman," comedy-drama, in four acts, by Henry C. De Mille and David Belasco. Opera Comique.
 „ 27 "The Rose of the Alhambra," burlesque extravaganza, by C. S. Parker. Parkhurst.
 „ 30 "The Babble Shop," burlesque, in one act, by Edward Rose. Trafalgar Square.
 April 1 "The Black Domino," drama, in five acts, by Geo. R. Sims and Robert Buchanan. Adelphi.
 „ 1 "Half Mast High," drama, in four acts, by Tom Craven. Pavilion.
 „ 1 "Dan's Delight," written by A. Armstrong, music by J. W. Elliott. St. George's Hall. German Reed Entertainment.
 „ 3 "Uncle John," a play in three acts, by Geo. R. Sims and Cecil Raleigh. Vaudeville.
 „ 3 "No Man's Land," drama, five acts, by John Douglas. Grand.
 „ 3 "Money Mad," drama, in five acts, by Steele Mackaye. Surrey.
 „ 6 "Clever Alice," comedy, in three acts, adapted from the German of Adolf Willbrandt, by Brandon Thomas. Royalty.
 „ 8° "Louis XI.," play, adapted from the French of Casimir Delavigne. Lyceum.
 „ 8 "The Crossing Sweeper," a musical sketch, by Basil Hood, music by Walter Slaughter. Gaiety.
 „ 11 "Cynthia's Sacrifice," a dramatic episode, in one act, by Edwin Drew. St. George's Hall.

- April 13 "Morocco Bound," a musical farcical comedy, in two acts, libretto by Arthur Branscombe; lyrics by Adrian Ross; music by F. Osmond Carr. Shaftesbury.
- " 15 "The Silver Shell," drama, in four acts, by Henry J. W. Dam.
- " 15 "The Masterpiece," comedietta, in one act, by Mrs. Hugh Bell. Royalty.
- " 17 "A Drawn Battle," an original duologue, by Malcolm Watson. Opera Comique.
- " 19 "A Woman of No Importance," play, in four acts, by Oscar Wilde. Haymarket.

In the Provinces, from March 22nd to April 10th, 1893 :—

- Mar. 22 "The Democrat," play, in four acts, by Charles Rogers. (For copyright purposes.) Grand, Notts.
- " 27 "A Brother's Crime," drama, in four acts, by Vivian Edmonds. T.R., Warrington.
- " 27 "The Road to Fortune," drama, in five acts, by Charles E. Dering. Grand Theatre, Stonehouse, Plymouth.
- " 29 "Kenneth Dunbar, a City Man," drama, in three acts, by W. A. Brabner. (Produced by amateurs.) Athenæum Hall, Manchester.
- " 30 "Sins of the Night," drama, in five acts, by Frank Harvey. T.R., Barnsley.
- April 1 "Kenilworth," burlesque, by C. J. Archer and A. E. Aubert. T.R., Croydon.
- " 1 "The Babes in the Wood Up to Date," by George Belmore. Park Town Theatre, Battersea.
- " 2 "The Priest Hunter," drama, by Hubert O'Grady. Queen's, Manchester.
- " 6 "Circumstantial Evidence," comedy, in one act, by Raymond Carew. Bijou Theatre, Bayswater.
- " 7 "Midsummer Eve," an opera for children, by Arthur Kaye; composed by William Boyd. Albemarle College, Beckenham.
- " 8 "A False Friend," drama, in three acts, by Shirley Howlett. Institute, Liverpool.
- " 10 "Wep-ton-no-Mah," drama, in five acts, by Go-won-go Mohawk. Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool.

In Paris, from March 12th to April 7th, 1893 :—

- Mar. 16 "Le Voyage des Berluron," vaudeville, in four acts, by MM. Ordonneau, Grénet-Dancourt, and Kéroul. Theatre Déjazet.
- " 17 "Les Drames Sacrés," in three acts, by MM. Armand Silvestre and Eugène Morand; music by M. Gounod. Vaudeville.
- " 22 "La Maison Tamponin," comedy, in three acts, by MM. Ernest Blum and Raoul Toché. Palais Royal.
- " 24 "Kassya," lyrical drama, in four acts, by MM. Henri Meilhac and Philippe Gille, music by the late Leo Delibes. Opéra Comique.
- " 25 "Le Capitaine Belle-Humeur," five-act drama, by MM. Henri Duchez and Georges de Bompar. Ambigu.
- " 27 "Mirages," drama, in five acts, by M. Georges Lecomte. Produced at the Théâtre Libre. (Menus-Plaisirs.)
- " 27^e "Les Effrontés," a comedy, by Emile Augier. Comédie-Française.
- " 29 "Madame Suzette," operetta, in three acts, by M. André Sylvanne Maurice Ordonneau, music by M. Edmond Audran. Bouffes-Parisiens.
- " 30 "Jean Raison," operetta, in three acts, by Paul Burani; music by M. Marias Carman. Folies Dramatiques.
- " 31 "La Fille du Marin," comedy, by MM. Lebreton and Moreau, music by M. Vargnes. Eldorado.
- April 7 "La Crise," comedy, in three acts, by M. Maurice Boniface. Vaudeville.





MR. IRVING AS MATHIAS IN "THE BELLS."

*From the Statuette exhibited at the New Gallery,
by Mr. Onslow Ford.*

THE THEATRE.

JUNE, 1893.

Stars of the Stage.

NO. II.—MISS KATE RORKE.



ELLE est adorable ! Mdle. Rorke est une charmante fille de sa patrie !”

Thus said a famous French dramatic critic of the creation of the young actress who gave to the world her artistic impersonation of “Sophia” in Robert Buchanan’s version of “Tom Jones.” Frank, spontaneous girlishness was essential to the part. All this Miss Kate Rorke gave. And to her open-hearted, winning way of rendering the character, the actress brought a cultivated mind which inobtrusively threw a glow over the play. A girl in the eighteenth century knew not Girtton or Newnham, and knowing this Miss Rorke artistically kept her own active intellect well in the background. The remembrance of her triumphs in this and many another play filled my mind as I made my way the other day to the home of Miss Rorke in St. John’s Wood. St. John’s Wood, with its leafy trees, its quaint, old world homes, is a district beloved of artists and actors. The residence of the talented lady, upon whom I called, is rich in associations, unique in interest. Curiously enough, it is the house in which Mr. Pinero for many years dwelt. There in a little “tunnel”—converted into a delightful study—he worked out many of the plays which the world will not willingly forget ; in the garden many a plot, full of devious ways and quaint imaginings, came to the dramatist to be transformed from the transient, fleeting thought into the living, breathing word. It is a joy to Miss Rorke to feel that in her occupancy of this house she has succeeded the writer in whose plays she has more than once created a part.

A simple, unaffected home is this. With her husband—Mr. E. W. Gardiner, an actor not unknown here and in the United States—Miss Kate Rorke lives a happy life, devoted to her art. Many-sided in her likings as she is, yet is she ever dreaming of, ever conceiving,

some situation which may render her parts effective. Her garden is the scene of many quiet, patient rehearsals. Here it is where she recites her author's words, and as she treads the lawny stage acquires that finish seen at its best when she appears on the boards of the "Garriek." Miss Rorke has been rehearsing all the morning, and, when she welcomes me in her drawing-room, gives a pretty account of her work. In this apartment you cannot but be struck by a characteristic etching, by Mr. Hubert Herkomer, which hangs on the wall. It was presented "with good wishes" by the artist to his actress-friend on the occasion of her marriage with Mr. Gardiner. Elsewhere are the portraits of Mr. Sidney Grundy and Mr. Pinero, given by the dramatists as a slight recognition of Miss Rorke's services in the representation of some of their different plays. Gifts from Mr. Hare there are in plenty. The genial actor-manager is one of Miss Rorke's best and earliest friends. Here is his own portrait given on the occasion of a famous one-hundredth performance, there is a silver bowl of George III.'s time, bearing the inscription, "To Kate Rorke from John Hare on the occasion of her marriage, August 8th, 1889." In the same room appears an old silver ink-stand given by Mr. and Mrs. Ben Davies; while on the wall, among other works of art, hangs a little sketch of Miss Rorke by Mr. Bernard Partridge. The artist took a "back view" portrait, and added the jingle—

"There was a young lady named Rorke
Who went out to play in New York,
She played the soubrette
And she played it, you bet;
As light as a beer-bottle cork."

Mr. Pinero's "tunnel" is still a study. Here it is where Miss Rorke conducts her correspondence. It is a delightful little place. At the drawing-room end is the coolest of greeneries, while on one side are the trees of the front garden. In the dining room is a proof engraving of Mrs. Siddons, from the picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence. Found at the Palais Royal, after the burning of that famous hotel during the revolution of 1848, it now hangs as it appeared when rescued from the smouldering ruins of Louis Phillippe's home. With charred and blackened edges it is a curious relic of a wild, stormy time.

"A friend, the other day," Miss Rorke said, with an amused smile, "surprised us by asking why we didn't have the sides of the engraving trimmed down and the charred part hidden by a red plush frame!"

In the hall and on the stairs is a fine collection of Hogarth's prints. An enthusiastic collector, Mr. Gardiner justly prides himself upon the fine examples he has gathered together of the famous artist's work.

Our talk turned to Miss Rorke and her artistic work. I asked her when she first went on the stage. She answers with a modest reluctance.

"It is very curious now to think," she tells me, "that when I was little I had a strong disinclination to go on the stage. Why I felt a reluctance it is hard to say, but there it was. And when I think that I came from a dramatic family I am all the more surprised. My grandfather was an actor of some repute, while on my mother's side, I had many dramatic connections. My mother acted a great deal, and my aunt, Sarah Woolgar, who married Alfred Mellon, was a well-known actress. Then there is my sister Mary, who went on the stage when she was six. At home we often had family theatricals, and there, I suppose, although there was no strong leaning on my part towards the stage, I gained a little experience of the art of acting."

"Perhaps a little against my will, I was invited to become one of the four little maidens who present a bouquet to Olivia in the first act of Mr. Wills's play. I was but a little girl at the time, 1878, and the theatre was the old Court. Miss Ellen Terry was Olivia, and she was particularly nice to me. I looked upon her as a sort of goddess, a being of another world. Although I was so young, yet I shall never forget the impression made upon me by Miss Terry's acting. She fascinated me, and night after night, when the first act was over, did I stand at the back of the pit watching her performance. She carried us away with her, and my experience with her at the Court is one of my sweetest recollections. I remember we had to sing, but although my brother said I had a voice, I am sure I sang out of tune. The manager used to say that someone sang flat, but then I always said it was not *me*. Now I begin to fear it was." And Miss Rorke's face became illuminated with a delightful smile as she recalled these early days of her career.

"And what followed the Court days?" I ask.

"Oh, school again. I was glad to get away from the publicity of the stage life, and welcomed my quiet days of school lessons to work. But it was not for long. One night we had a little performance in the school, to which Mr. Cathcart, Mr. Hare's manager, came. He saw me act."

Miss Rorke's relatives asked Mr. Cathcart whether it would be desirable that the little girl should seriously give up her mind to making the stage a means of earning her livelihood. "Most certainly," was his emphatic response, "she will do well and make a first-rate actress." Then her interest in her art awakened. Mr. Wyndham was seen with a view to his giving her a part in "Truth." Miss Rorke even then showed promise enough, but the difficulty of making a girl in her early teens look like an "engaged" young lady was altogether too much even for the powers of that clever manager.

"So some months after, Mr. Hastings, of the Haymarket Theatre," the actress continues, "asked me to play a part in 'School.' Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, when making the trial of the cast for 'School,' were kind enough to make good Mr. Hastings's choice. I shall never forget how proud I felt when Mr. Bancroft turned to his wife and said, 'That girl has got a face that should do

something when she gets older.' Although I was with the Bancrofts but a few weeks, I found them perfectly delightful, and to their kind help I am much indebted. It was during this run that Mr. Wyndham saw me act. Then he must have changed his mind about my youth, for he at once offered me a two years' engagement in his company at the Criterion. Then began my long connection with Mr. Wyndham."

That connection proved one of the utmost value to actress and to actor-manager. With Mr. Wyndham for five years, Miss Rorke played in all the famous Criterion successes of the early eighties. She went with him to America, and there acquired a reputation as an actress possessing a versatility singularly fresh and spontaneous. Miss Rorke has a grateful memory of the experience she gained during her stay with the Criterion company—an experience which she regards as an apprenticeship to her much-loved art.

"Mr. Wyndham," she says, "taught me many things I have never forgotten. When I was but a little child in his eyes, he taught me—as he taught others—with all the care that he would bestow upon his own kin. He taught me not to sing an emotional speech, not to intone, not to hold my hands in an awkward position, not to walk in an ungainly way across the stage—all things which a beginner must learn. Every word Mr. Wyndham said to me in those days was golden. He was a wonderful man for helping on a young actress. There was nothing unselfish about him, nothing to hint to his audience that he was a star and the sole star. I found him of the greatest help in acting—he is one of the most magnetic actors I have met. It is an unpleasant experience to meet on the stage an actor whom you find unsympathetic. To act with him is like beating against a stone wall. You lose your strength in trying to fight down his coldness and lack of sympathy."

By an accident Miss Rorke showed that she could stand alone as an actress of great emotional power. In the latter days of her Criterion career, she was invited to act in Mr. Sidney Grundy's clever play, "The Silver Shield." She appeared in a *matinée* at the Strand Theatre. Her representation of Lucy Preston was an instantaneous success. When the play was transferred to the Comedy Theatre, it met with a fine reception, and its run was altogether a success. The story is told that on one evening of the run a gallery "goddess" was much affected at Miss Rorke's representation of the friendless young wife who fears she has lost her husband's love. As Lucy Preston sobbed forth the despairing words—"Ned, Ned, come back to me; don't leave me desolate!"—and fell fainting on the floor, the lady in the gallery could bear it no longer. Strung to a pitch of great excitement she shrieked out, "Never fear, miss, never fear; it's all a — lie!"

"After the 'Silver Shield' run," Miss Rorke goes on, "I accepted an engagement with Mr. Thorne at the Vaudeville. There, you know, I appeared in 'Sophia' and 'Joseph's Sweetheart.' Both were successes, both had long runs."

"Did you not find the long runs cause your acting to suffer?"

"No, not in the least. Occasionally, though, you would find that in the scenes in which you had little to do, your mind wandered from your work, but in the emotional parts I never felt the slightest fear of becoming an automaton. I have always found, however, that I go on the stage with the most nervous anxiety whether I should feel my part. I have much less exertion in playing a part that I feel than in playing one which one practically walks through. Thus, the emotional parts which people regard as the most difficult are to me the easiest."

"When with Mr. Thorne," Miss Rorke went on, "I became the party to a very mysterious engagement. One day, during the run of 'Held by the Enemy' at the Vaudeville, I received a letter from Mr. Pinero asking if he could see me. Well, Mr. Pinero sent for me here and he saw me in this very room which was then his. He wanted me to play a leading part in one of his own plays, but under whose management he did not say. We came to an agreement, and then the matter seemed to drop. Twelve months later I was surprised to see paragraphs in the papers announcing that the leading lady at Mr. Hare's new theatre—the Garrick—was to be myself. As I had heard nothing of this, I at once contradicted the report, knowing of my arrangement with Mr. Pinero. But I was more than ever surprised to learn from Mr. Hare that the play was to be produced at the Garrick and under his management."

"And then began your long connection with Mr. Hare?"

"Yes, in 1889 I appeared as Leslie Brudenell in 'The Profligate.' Then followed Mrs. Goldfinch in 'A Pair of Spectacles,' the notable production of 'Lady Bountiful,' with a few weeks' performances as Helena in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' with Mr. Benson's company at the Globe. And here I am to-day with Mr. Hare in 'Diplomacy,' after as unexciting and uneventful a career as you could imagine. Broadly speaking, during my theatrical life, I have been under three managers only—Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Thorne, and Mr. Hare. I don't altogether know whether for a young actress such a career is all for the best. So far as I have seen, I should lean to the idea that in the United States an actor or an actress has a greater chance of advancement than here. The American manager is not an actor, but a speculator. In the case of an actress, the American manager will consider with himself, 'Is it to my advantage to run this man or woman.' He does so; there is a great success. In time the contract expires. Then the actor and actress, if there is anything in them, form a company of their own, and their names being known over the length and breadth of the land, they also profit not a little. That you cannot do in this country, because you have few or no managers who are speculators and nothing else."

"But you cannot get over the fact that, however good the American system may be to the actress when she has made a name, there is no school so good as the theatre of an actor-manager like Mr. Hare or Mr. Wyndham. People are always talking about the establishment

of acting academies. But, when you have achieved your academies, who are you to appoint as teachers? The teachers you need are the men who are the acting managers—men who are the heads of the profession, who are the masters of their craft. But managers such as Mr. Irving and Mr. Hare are of course the men who are too busy to give any time to teaching in an acting academy. Who then are you to get? As far as I can see, from my short experience, the only academy of any value is the stage itself. The good actor or actress will somehow find his or her way to good work; but you cannot expect a manager to accept the services of an academy-bred young man or woman, turned out in a stereotyped way like a score of fellow students, and not possessed of the slightest experience as far as actual performance in plays is concerned."

"When a little girl, I went to the very best teachers of deportment in London; then came elocution and stage dancing and voice production; in fact, I learnt everything that was likely to be of use. But then I had to bring to bear a strong liking for the work, and the most careful study of the acting of the men and women with whom I was fortunate enough to play. My aunt, Mrs. Mellon, used to tell me 'gesture for man, not for woman.' I have never forgotten those words. It is much easier to move one's arms a bit than to keep still. To my mind the most difficult thing to learn is to be simple and natural. It is very much easier to 'act' than to be perfectly natural. In old days my greatest difficulty was to escape being affected—to be, instead, quite simple. All along I have kept before me the word—simplicity. If you can gain an effect by simple means you will find it tells much more forcibly than the effect you procure with labour and exaggeration. But you can only learn what to avoid and what not to avoid by watching the acting of men and women like Mrs. Kendal, Miss Terry, Mr. Irving, Mr. Hare, Mr. Wyndham, and others whose names will occur to you. To me there is nothing more delightful in following Mr. Hare than to see how often he is content to play a small, comparatively unimportant part in his productions. And with what a wealth of talent he enriches the most trifling character."

And so our talk comes to an end, and the fair actress prepares to leave for the Garrick to take up her present part of Dora. In this, as in all else, Miss Rorke shows the talent which is her happy possession; and invests a character hardly worthy of her highest powers with a womanliness and a charm delightful to enjoy.

ARTHUR CROXTON.



No 14. Waltz ...
 "Miss Kitty Steyne"
 (Rondeau)

Miss Kitty Steyne .. an echo rare
 Of Old-World sweetness lingers
 there,
 And fancy, at the sound, pours
 Some Blushing Toast, the Ton-
 bridge craze,
 With sprigged brocade and
 powdered hair!

You should be making Fox despair,
 GEORGE SELWYN sigh, and WALPOLE stare,
 Setting their modish hearts ablaze,

Miss Kitty Steyne!

And now, a partner light
 as air,

Still bringing gladness ev-
 erywhere,

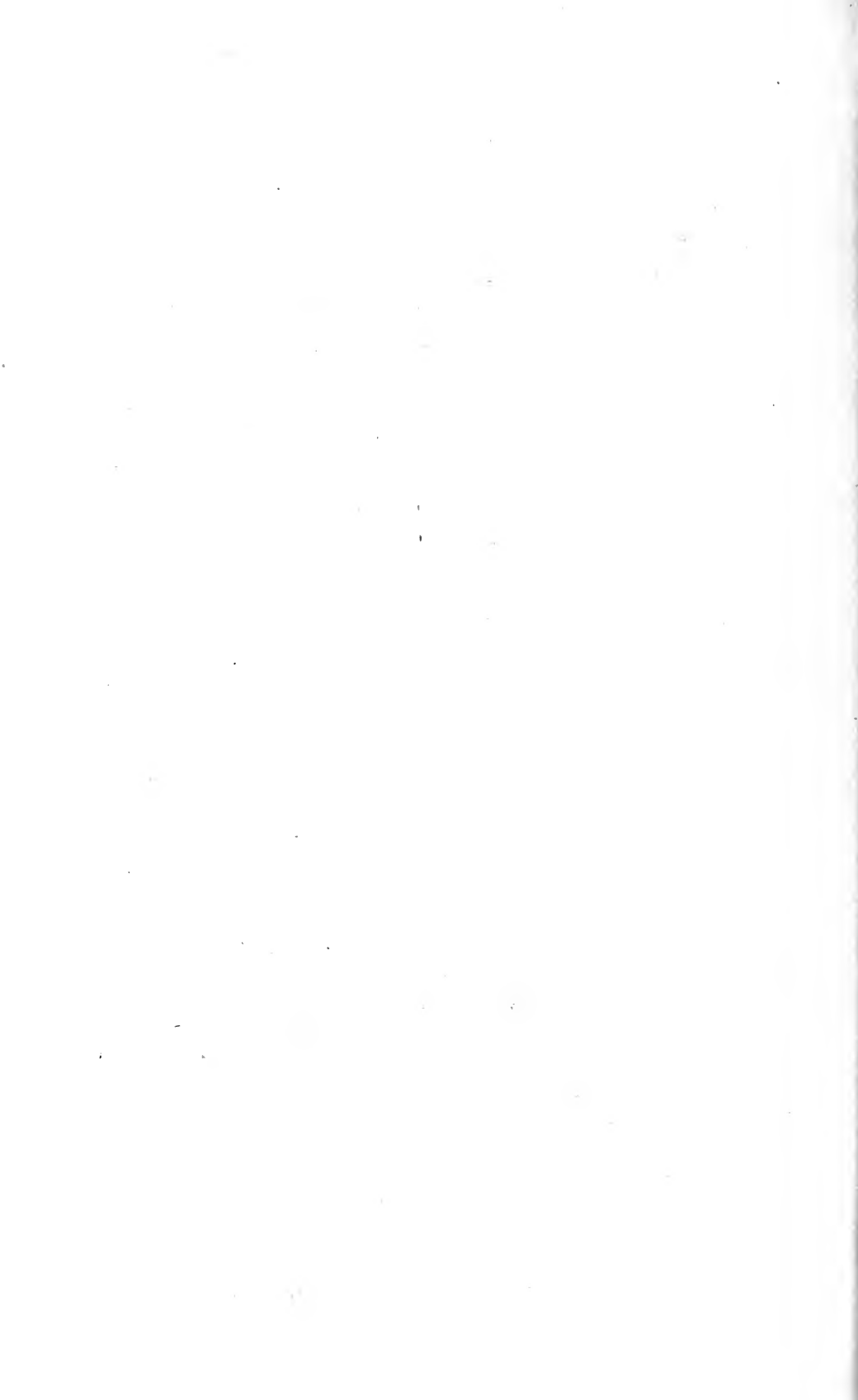
To win a sweeter gallant's
 gaze

You come, in these circumscribed
 days,

No whit less blithe and debonaire,

Miss Kitty Steyne!

Wm. G. W. G.



The Suicide in Curb Street.



It was absurd that a man should be expected to go on living under such conditions. There was really no reason for it. He splashed through the muddy slums towards Curb Street quite resolved on what he would do. Why should one continue a struggle tedious in itself and quite certain not to result in victory? He did not love life; why should he keep it; it offered him no pleasure in the present and no hope in the future. Life was a burden, that was all.

It was different with Letty; Letty loved life, she had said so; she had hope for the future. She had faith in herself, in her art, in God; he had not; that made a great difference.

He had been with Letty earlier in the evening and they had talked of this matter as they often did; his indifference to life had grieved her. She loved life so very much; she had tried to laugh at his gloomy speeches. She had made tea, and twisted him cigarettes and done her best to comfort him, but he had not been comforted in the least. It was hateful to him to see Letty leading this shabby life; it pained him to see her moving about her poor room in that ragged dirty old green dressing-gown.

It would have been very different if he had had a thousand a year to share with Letty. Or if there had been even the faintest prospect of his ever getting an engagement at a good theatre; but there was none, he was sure of that now; innumerable applications to managers who did not want him had convinced him of that. There were times when the whole world seemed composed of managers who did not want him; he was hemmed in by a circle of managers who did not want him—a circle always narrowing and narrowing towards one point, and that point a grave.

Letty wanted him it was true. Letty was fond of him. He had seen so much in her pained face, when he could not be persuaded to love life, but Letty would soon get over the loss of him, indeed it was not fair to her that he should remain a drag on her progress. She was cleverer than he; had many chances of success, while he had none; her very love of life would make life pleasant to her. She would succeed and forget him; she was not a girl to fret weakly over any trouble. He had seen how she could bear a blow once, when a girl whom she loved as only working women can love each other had disappointed her. She had held out against very convincing evidence for a long time, standing up for her friend valiantly, but at last the plain truth had been too much for her. She had said very little, but she had changed for a time, seemed less self-reliant and light-hearted; thrown off her balance as it were by the shock, she

had walked unsteadily and leaned on him a little more than formerly, but she had soon seemed to pull herself together and be light-hearted again. She would do the same with regard to him.

But the thought of Letty's getting over the loss of him was not quite pleasant; he hurried on to escape it. He climbed up the dingy stairs to his rooms at the top of the house, and stumbled across his dark room, pulling off his shabby dripping ulster. How he hated rain and shabbiness, and a cold room with no one to have it lighted and warmed and made beautiful for him. Why if he rung for his landlady, and demanded a fire at this time of night, she would pay no attention at all, or else thrust a frowsy head through her bedroom door and give him notice for disturbing the house; all these things were unbearable; he almost despised Letty for the cheerfulness with which she submitted to such a life.

He took a packet out of his coat pocket, and flung the coat over the big chair, straight out to give it a chance of drying by the morning. That was the mechanical carefulness of habit, one of the contemptible meannesses that made life loathsome to him, but now he laughed at it, it would be unimportant to-morrow if his coat were wet, there would be no more discomfort after to-night. He could have wished the room had been warmer, and his feet not wet for just this last evening on earth, but then if things had been more comfortable there would have been no need for this to be his last evening.

It was a pity he had not been able to do the thing in the restaurant where he had been having supper, when he was warm and comfortable, but he had a feeling that it would have been unfair and ill-bred to spoil the supper of all the other people present by such an ugly incident.

There was no need for an ugly incident there or elsewhere; revolvers were rowdy—and expensive; poisons were some of them painful, and knowing nothing about them, he would not have known what to choose. The means he had chosen were easy and quiet and economical.

He said the last word bitterly; it was hard to have to study that hated economy to the very last.

He sat down in the window seat languidly, not to think the matter over, he had been thinking of nothing else so long, but just to dwell for a moment on the tedious, sordid, hopeless struggle that was past, that he might enjoy more by contrast, the ease of death; to quote voluptuous lines from Keats and Swinburne over death; to triumph in the thought that there would be plenty of room for him where he was going. There was no over-competition among the dead; no one to dismiss his application with careless haste, when he would join that company.

We are all as great as Death; there was infinite comfort in the thought. If we must go to death when he calls, equally he must obey us when we summon him. All his defeats and humiliations and anxieties, ceased to hurt at the thought. He stood up proudly to compel the conqueror of all men to be his servant.

But economically, always economically, with a packet of charcoal, and a couple of vestas; the economy did not irritate him now. It made his act more of a triumph. With how little cost and effort this great relief could be won, after all! He filled up the interstices of the window frame with pieces of newspaper, brought a blanket from his bed, flung it over the door, and shut the door firmly on it. The fire-place was all right; he knew the register was shut down and a dirty curtain hung before it a week ago, when his landlady had decided that it was time for him to give up fires. He covered over the bedroom door with another blanket, took a big ugly China plate from the wall and lighted the charcoal upon it. Then he lay down on the sofa and began to smoke.

How easily it had all been done.

Lying there smoking he had already killed himself; he knew it, and the thought was unspeakably delightful. He knew that if he chose, he could rise and open the door and live, and he knew he had no desire to do so. The mere possibility almost disturbed him, he was uneasy to think that it was just on the cards some visitor might come in or his landlady awake and render all his preparations ineffective.

Then he remembered how few people he knew, and how unlikely it was that any of these few should call on him. It was late, too, and his preparations had been made with instinctive quiet, and could not have awakened anyone. The whole house was asleep; no one was likely to trouble him.

He would neither be troubled any more nor trouble others. Soft delicious dream-waves were already carrying him away from all that was sordid and painful and unlovely. It was as if he had left this struggling world and gone into limitless space, and space was very still and pleasant.

He realised that now, did he wish to raise himself and live he could not, and the knowledge was infinite pleasure to him. He was as good as dead already. Death had him in its arms, and was caressing him to sleep. Death was not cold, nor terrible, nor harsh, but warm and gentle. He murmured to himself with little inarticulate sounds of enjoyment. Death was such a luxury.

Hours, ages of delicious dreams, all his eternity in this golden drowsiness, such wonderful secrets—such colours—such soft sounds—some one singing far off.

* * * * *

A moment's agonising struggle, a devil clutching at his throat! a fight for breath! a spasm of intolerable pain. If he could but rise or cry out; if he could cry loud so that some one in the house might wake, and hear and save him. Was everyone in the house dead or asleep; surely he heard his own cry—a sound in the street outside? God! that it would but break the window and let in air, air! There was no air in the grave; the earth was heavy on his breast and face, blinding and choking him. He struggled against it; he fought with his hands to throw off the load; he fought for life.

"Oh! The sweet valley of deep grass
Where through the summer stream doth pass,
In chain of shallow and still pool . . ."

A salmon at the end of a long line, plunging and darting up and down, fighting for its life among the red rocks of the Cumberland river; a flash of silver and blue. Ah! it was gone, and someone was laughing; Letty, no, she was not there. . . . A boat on the sea, and the fresh wind blowing; the sense of strength as the boat creaked and turned under his hand to meet the waves; the salt water splashed in his face; delicious, he drew his lips inwards to taste the fresh spray. Letty again; was it her lips or the sea spray that had seemed so pleasant.

Ninety! And the whole school sent up a great cheer; he felt the blood beating against the bat in his hand, the air was fragrant with triumph. But Letty could not possibly have been there then. She was in her little room in the next street kneeling on the hearth heating the irons to curl her pretty soft hair. She threatened him with the hot iron when he wanted to kiss her; but he did kiss her. Never again—never again, he should not see that little room, nor feel warm air on his face, nor the sea spray on his lips, nor the delight of contest, nor the pleasure of strength, nor have the praise of his friends, nor be missed by any woman, for he was dead, dead! The rest of the world was alive, but he was dead; gone out of it, no part of it any more; and Letty was left in it. She was forgetting, another man would comfort her. A living man! It was terrible to be so jealous of a living man; he hated that man for living, for comforting Letty. Then he saw Letty was not comforted really, for her eyes were quite sad while she listened. She only listened because she was so tired and lonely. What? Why the man was a bad man and deceiving her, Letty would be heart-broken, shamed, and he could not help her because he was dead.

* * * * *

It was morning; he pulled himself off the sofa with a painful effort. All his limbs ached, and he felt exceedingly sick; he remarked that he had been a damned fool, and, struggling to the window, jerked it open. The fresh air revived him. It was a fine day; he laughed when he saw that; Nature was always so conventional. Of course it was a fine day after yesterday's rain. Of course the sunlight was turning the drops of water on the window ledges and the gutters into diamonds and rubies. Nature was sure to remember these details at such a crisis. The bright sunlight uttered its commonplace reproaches. "Could you not wait for me?" He felt capable of hearing a commonplace moral in the chirping of the smutty sparrows.

"In two minutes" he said, "I shall be capable of writing a 'Moral warning to suicides; life is so very conventional.'"

The atmosphere of the room was still heavy and sickly; that reproached him, too. His eye fell on the plate of burnt-out charcoal and the scattered matches; he was dreadfully ashamed of his *fiasco*.

Certainly death was not even dignified if it could play such tricks as this. He saw the whole scene as it would have been had he succeeded, when someone had come and found him dead in this sickly odour, among these unlovely surroundings, stretched out on that sofa with his mouth open, his feet standing stiffly up in very ill-made boots. He was very much relieved that he was not dead; he would go to Letty.

Letty would be breakfasting, she would have on that dreadful old dressing-gown; how sweet she looked in it, and how pleased she would be to see him. She would rise to reach him a cup and saucer, and perhaps catch her foot in that tear in the hem and stumble; he hoped she would.

He would tell her all this, not jestingly, for that would shock her, nor not too seriously either, for no sadness must spoil this day of life. They would go down to Kew Gardens together—third class, what did it matter—and sit under the trees all day, and be very happy.

There should be no more dying.

He would take his ulster, for the ground would still be damp—these precautions did not seem irritating now—and they could sit on it on the grass among the trees, out of the beaten track, and eat tarts from a paper bag.

He laid his hand on the coat at a touch; it fell to the floor.

What was this? Lying back in the chair, her hands clenched, her eyes wide open, her face twisted with agony, was Letty, dead! quite dead!

In her hand was some crushed paper, a letter, a newspaper cutting, some little piece of good news which had come by post after he had left her last night, one of those trivial triumphs—a success for him or for her—which could always throw her into such a foolish passion of optimism. She had come round to his rooms in their careless innocent Bohemian fashion to tell him all about it, and had fallen asleep waiting for him. She had slept heavily, for his quiet movements had not roused her, and the coat flung across the arm of the chair had prevented him seeing her in the darkness, and in his pre-occupation. The charcoal fumes, not strong enough to kill him, had been too much for her. Perhaps because she was farther from the window, perhaps through some constitutional weakness, for she had died in the moment of agony, like that which he remembered; her clenched hands and twisted face showed him so much. Had that cry he thought his own been hers? Or had it been sooner, when he fancied he had heard some one singing.

NORA VYNNE.



Actors of the Age :

RECOLLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS.

I.—THE PAST GENERATION.



BEFORE I begin to gossip—for it will be only gossip, slight, unsystematic, and very far from exhaustive—about the players of to-day, the men and women still actively working among us, I should like to say a few words about my favourites of the past, about the pleasant memories which cling round a large number of actors and actresses who either have gone over to the majority or in some other way have been removed from the playgoer's ken. And I may as well say at once that I do not propose to go back to the very farthest point in my recollection. I do not think that the impressions of a youth deserve recording. They are necessarily uncritical, because the boy theatre-goer always enjoys everything he sees. For a time, at any rate, all is charming. Moreover, many of the great players of the past were, when I saw them, in their decline. Phelps, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, Alfred Wigan, Benjamin Webster, Sam Emery—these were near the end of their career when I began to take an interest in the theatre.

My first trustworthy reminiscences attach to a play, "The Silver Lining," produced at the St. James's Theatre half-way in the sixties. I shall always remember that, because it was my introduction to delightful Charles Mathews and his (as I thought her) charming wife, and also to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Matthews (Matthews with two t's), of whom the last-named recurs to me as a buxom comedian with much breadth of style. For years after that, Charles Mathews remained one of the gods of my theatrical idolatry. I am so much of an "old fogey" as to think that his place has never been filled. Mr. Wyndham is sometimes spoken of as the Charles Mathews of our day, but I cannot see the resemblance. Mr. Wyndham, as a comedian, is essentially of the brisk and bustling order—deliciously brisk and bustling. Mathews, as I knew him, was nothing of the sort. He was agreeably volatile, but he was not restless. Quite the contrary : he was a master of repose. He could stand still in the middle of the stage and keep his audience amused for minutes together. The two chief characteristics of his acting were ease and finish. He rarely attempted to do more than he could readily achieve. He had neither breadth nor depth, but the surface was highly polished. I do not expect ever again to enjoy anything so much as I enjoyed

the short farces in which Mathews loved to play. In these he was really inimitable, in the literal sense of that much-abused word. He was unequal to the stronger or tenderer passages in such pieces as "The Game of Speculation" and "Used Up"; he had, apparently, no feeling. But in comediettas of the class of "Had I £1,000 a Year," in which he filled the stage from beginning to end, he was exquisite in his insouciance and imperturbability.

My affections were next engaged by a company rather than by a player—the Haymarket company in Buckstone's day. Here I had my first experience of what is meant by histrionic *ensemble*. One might revel in Buckstone, or Compton, or the Chippendales singly, but it was the work that they and their coadjutors did as a body that first impressed me. I have seen nothing equal to it since. I have seen something approaching to it, in the case of the Augustin Daly troupe, and in the case of isolated performances in London from time to time, but nothing quite so perfect as the unerring precision with which Buckstone and his *confrères* played into each other's hands. This perfection was owing not only to the fact that they had acted so long together, but to the fact that they had always acted in the same class of piece. English actors of to-day, though they remain for some time under the same management, will skip light-heartedly from tragedy to comedy, from melodrama to farce, and no doubt are the better all-round artists for so doing. But the result is that in no one London company do you find the absolute accuracy of effect, carried throughout a homogeneous repertory, that we found in the Buckstone company at its best. The troupe adhered to comedy old and new, and was unapproachable in it. Buckstone, Compton, and the Chippendales all possessed strongly marked individualities, and were always acceptable in what they did. The three last were artists, and did not need to depend, as Buckstone depended so largely, upon peculiarities of voice and facial play. I have seen no Tony Lumpkin to equal Compton's, no Sir Peter Teazle to equal Chippendale's, no Mrs. Malaprop that could touch Mrs. Chippendale's. Mr. William Farren is the legitimate successor of Chippendale, but plays too much to his audience. Mrs. Chippendale, so far, has had no successor, though I do not despair of seeing one before I die. Mrs. John Wood is with us, and she could play Mrs. Malaprop superbly, I think, if she desired.

There was another histrionic organisation which, as an organisation, gave me very great pleasure in my early playgoing days. That was Mdlle. Beatrice's company. There, of course, the art was on a lower plane than in the case of the Haymarket comedians, but it had the great merit and distinction of being sound and complete so far as it went. In those days Mdlle. Beatrice's most prominent associate was T. N. Wenman (latterly a member of the Lyceum company, and now, alas! departed). I have a very keen recollection of that accomplished player's finely-conceived Brigard. He was equally effective in "Nos Intimes," and, indeed, in all parts requiring a sort of rugged power, such as Burchell and the like. Mdlle. Beatrice's attraction

lay in a certain elegance of figure, walk, and pose, and in the sweet sympathetic voice to which a foreign accent clung to the last. I remember her best as she was in Frou Frou, perhaps the best of her parts. I recollect, too, her performance in "The Sphinx," which had more vigour and intensity than she was wont to throw into her assumptions. Considering that she passed so much of her time in "touring," it is wonderful that she retained for so long her agreeable delicacy of manner.

In those halcyon times there was no travelling troupe more welcome to theatre-goers than that which called itself "The Caste Company." It varied in *personnel* from time to time, but it was never incompetent, and usually it was adequate. Here, again, it was the excellence of the *ensemble* that first delighted. The Robertsonian traditions in the way of "business" were carefully handed down, and the comedies received the most careful interpretation. The company was in a high state of efficiency when Craven Robertson ruled it. He was the Captain Hawtree and Jack Poyntz of the combination, and in such *rôles* was admirable. No doubt he owed something to Mr. Bancroft, but not much. He had individuality, as all the Robertsons have, and, personally, I preferred his Poyntz and Hawtree to Mr. Bancroft's. He was cut off in his prime, but his impersonations will always be among the most cherished of my older memories. I would rank with him, as standing high in my roll of artistic heroes, the late Richard Younge, who, in his way, did as much for H. J. Byron's comedies as Craven Robertson did for his brother's. R. W. Younge is often confounded with the late J. F. Young, but there was no similarity between the two comedians. J. F. Young was the dry humourist; R. W. Younge had unctious. The former was at his happiest as Old Eccles or in "Retiring"; the latter was most successful in such parts as those of Old Middlewick, which he played with all necessary breadth. The nearest approach to J. F. Young among the younger comedians of the past was Frederick Marshall, who made most impression on my mind as Moustia in Mr. Gilbert's "Broken Hearts," and as the old man in "Married in Haste"—Percy Pendragon. All these three players had, what Craven Robertson apparently had not, a vein of pathos. Young and Younge may be said to have lived their lives; poor Marshall was cut short in his.

I need not dwell upon the better-known comic actors of the past generation. I was never a very keen admirer of Edward Askew Sothorn. I laughed, as everybody laughed, at Dundreary; but it was only clever caricature. In "Home," I thought, Sothorn was a failure. His David Garrick had obvious limitations. I cannot think of him as having been an artist, and as deserving to be "placed" as such. His vogue, I take it, was the result of a happy fluke. We must always be grateful for the amusement he afforded us in this most famous *rôle*, but that is almost all. There was probably more real histrionic capacity in Lytton Sothorn than in his father, and I am quite prepared to appraise even more highly the young Mr.

Sothorn who, of late years, has been so popular in America. I used always to enjoy very much H. J. Byron's appearances as an actor. But it was hardly because they were great histrionic successes; it was rather because it was pleasant to see so popular a writer embodying, or trying to embody, his own creations. Especially attractive to me were his Sir Simon Simple in "Not Such a Fool as he Looks," his Fitzaltamont in "The Prompter's Box," and his Matthew Pincher in "Cyril's Success." I put these in their order of artistic merit; but probably, if one had to consider only their popular effectiveness, the order would have to be reversed. Byron, like Charles Mathews, had "repose," but he had nothing in reserve. His goods were all in the shop window. But they were "good goods," and, for myself, I liked to hear Byron slowly rapping out his own clever lines: they seemed to come from his lips with added point. Of George Honey, John Clarke, Lin Rayne, old David Fisher, W. J. Hill, H. Ashley, Dion Boucicault, there is nothing new to be said. If I mention John Clayton, it is only to testify that when I saw him play, with considerable pathos, Hugh Trevor in "All for Her," I did not expect ever to see him do anything so exquisitely funny as the Dean in "Dandy Dick." To think that he—and we—should only have discovered, almost too late, that he was one of the most delightful of comedians! I must add a word a two in liquidation of my debt to two comic actors of whom now one hears but little—Joe Eldred and Fred Vokes. Eldred's humour was provincial, but it was genuine. In "The Princess of Trebizonde" he was grotesquely funny. Fred Vokes was one of the very ablest of burlesque artists, and I have seen nothing more diverting in its way than the skit on the "Miserere" scene in "Il Trovatore" which he used to enact to admiration with his sister, Miss Victoria Vokes.

I have explained why I propose to say nothing here about Phelps, the Keans, Wigan, Webster, and so on. In the years when I first felt myself entitled to pronounce on merits and on defects, William Creswick, Charles Calvert, Charles Dillon, and Barry Sullivan were the most notable tragedians, the most distinguished exponents of the "legitimate." Of Creswick I remember most clearly his King Lear—perhaps because it was the first I ever saw. The surroundings were of no account whatever: that also may be a reason why the impersonation remains in my mind. It may be impossible to see Lear at all tolerably represented, and not be powerfully affected by it. Still, I think it must be admitted that Creswick, though absolutely uninspired, had intelligence and feeling, and a method which, if old-fashioned, was not unimpressive. He had not the individuality of any one of the three other tragedians I have named. He had not the suave sonority of Sullivan, the rugged picturesqueness of Dillon, or the cultivated carefulness of Calvert. Calvert will always abide in my memory less as an artist than as an *entrepreneur*. I recall little more of his performances than the distinctness and evenness of his elocution, and the skill with which he contrived to

hide or mitigate the shortness of his stature. Perhaps his most successful achievement, as an actor, was his Dr. Primrose : that had a certain measure of conventional pathos. His Cardinal Wolsey also had a considerable amount of stagey dignity. His Sardanapalus, alas ! was not at all convincing. On the other hand, his productions of "Sardanapalus" and "Henry VIII."—to name no others—were a great advance, in the matter of general *mise-en-scène*, upon anything of the kind that had been seen out of London for many years. It is, in fact, as a very clever and painstaking stage-manager that Charles Calvert deserves to be handed down to posterity.

To Barry Sullivan belongs the credit of holding high the banner of the "legitimate" amid many temptations to descend to melodrama. He had no subtlety either in conception or in execution. He took a broad view of every character, and reproduced it on broad lines. That, no doubt, was why he was so popular. No one could fail to grasp at once his idea of a *rôle*. Moreover, everything that he said could be as well heard as it was understood. If his delivery was monotonous, it was at least rhythmical and clear. He lived, to be sure, in the childhood of the age, but he helped to make Shakespeare intelligible to the child. He paved the way for something better. Charles Dillon, I have always held, was an able man almost wasted. He had, I should say, at least a touch of genius. There was more electricity in one of his assumptions than in all those of Sullivan and Calvert and Creswick put together. His Don Cæsar de Bazan and his Belphegor occur to me as especially characteristic of him at his highest level. His Virginius had some pathos and power, but it was in the best examples of melodrama that he was most at home and most fruitful. He had physical disadvantages against which his innate capacity successfully struggled. It is difficult not to believe that, under more fortunate circumstances, he would have created a deeper impression and left a more splendid reputation. John Ryder essayed latterly to play leading parts, but it was a mistaken ambition. I have seen few things more entirely inadequate than his Shylock. The incarnation of the most approved stage-traditions, he was passable in a second-rate *rôle* ; but when he attempted to fly at loftier game, the result was painful. He was, perhaps, the last of the representatives of the "old school," though he left behind him pupils who have been successful in proportion to the extent to which they have ignored his teaching.

I have left myself but little space in which to deal with actresses of the past. Miss Glyn I knew only in her character as a Shakespearean reader, but it was easy to see that she had something of "the grand manner," and that in such parts as Cleopatra she must have been really forcible and affecting. She had a good voice and an effective method of speech. I remember very well the later impersonations of Miss Caroline Heath—a thoroughly well-trained and judicious actress, whose Jane Shore has a place in my mental gallery of histrionic portraits. She was one of the remnants of the older school. Belonging to the old days, though comparatively young

when she died, was Phyllis Glover, a lineal descendant of the famous Mrs. Glover, and an artist of remarkable versatility. I have seen her play equally well Lady Teazle and a prince in a pantomime. She was the wife of Tom Powrie, the Scotch actor, and circumstances kept her comparatively in the shade. I am inclined to believe that if London had been the sphere of her labours she would have been saluted as an artist of great powers. She was one of the illusions of my early manhood. Another was Rose Massey, whom I recollect as very charming as Claire Ffolliott in "The Shaughraun." She too, surely passed away too soon, not only for her own fame, but for the good of the stage. Whom the "gods"—and not only the "gods"—love, die young. Adelaide Neilson died young, but happily not until she had done enough to be remembered by. I think her capabilities as an actress have been over-rated, but I am bound to say that she was the most delightful Juliet I ever saw. Very pretty, too, were her Rosalind and her Viola; but they did not charm one as her Juliet charmed. That delighted me so much that I was induced to perpetrate some rhymes about it, which eventually appeared in the pages of this magazine for April, 1882. I have other regrets to record. I mourn, as a playgoer, the early deaths of Marie Litton, of Louise Willes, of Mrs. Howard Paul, of Rachel Sanger, of Miss Wadman, of Miss Kate Munroe, of Miss Lucy Buckstone. Round Marie Litton cluster many agreeable associations. Louise Willes was an admirable Lady Clancarty. I remember Mrs. Paul as an "entertainer" and as one of the first exponents of Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Rachel Sanger was a twinkling star of burlesque, who shone even beside the effulgent light of Miss Lydia Thompson. Miss Wadman had an earnestness, and Miss Munroe a *chic*, not common in comic opera to-day. Miss Buckstone was to me always interesting as the daughter of her father, and she had an agreeable demureness all her own. Among those of the elder generation who have been taken from us lately are Miss Eleanor Bufton and Miss Harriett Coveney, the former of whom, alas! had long outlived her public. I first saw Miss Coveney as the pew-opener in "The Sorcerer." Up to nearly the very end she was one of the sprightliest of dames.

It is not death alone that makes ravages in the ranks of theatrical artists. Marriage is almost equally cruel. It carried off not only Miss Kate Terry, but Miss Florence Terry, whom I once saw play very pathetically in "Broken Hearts." It also carried off Miss Myra Holme, who was so excellent in her husband's "Girls and Boys." America, too, is an enemy, and a bitter one, to the British playgoer. It has deprived us of Miss Rose Coghlan and Miss Linda Dietz (a lady whose gifts have never been sufficiently recognised), of Mr. H. M. Pitt and Miss Fanny Addison. Australia has captured Mr. George Rignold; and as for those players who have gone voluntarily, or involuntarily, into retirement, who shall name them? Once more, my regrets go with them.

W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.



To Oscar Wilde, Esq.



IR,—I am emboldened to take the liberty of acquainting you in this letter with my past as well as actual opinion of your personality, by the certainty that in so doing I shall give expression to the ideas of a considerable number of people, and in the hope that a timely word of counsel may have some influence in persuading you to abandon some of the methods by which you have so far been content to seek the bubble reputation. You are in yourself a paradox as strange and confusing as any which has ever flowed from your pen, presenting as you do the curious spectacle of a man of genuine and brilliant talent who has made his success, not by the worthy culture and legitimate exhibition of that talent, but by the silliest kind of trick and quackery. You persistently advertised yourself for years through the length and breadth of the English speaking world as an insipid and pretentious dullard, whose motto was “notoriety at any price.” You were—with a very considerable difference—like the late Laureate when he dreamed there would be spring no more—you plucked the thorns of public contempt and wore them like a civic crown. Such small belief in your intelligence and sanity as were abroad a year or two ago was held only by your personal acquaintances; to the world in general you were that dreariest of bores, a buffoon with one trick which had long since ceased to be amusing. That the spectacle of a man of talent posing as a zany was not an absolute novelty, is proved by the ancient proverb that it takes a clever man to play a fool, but if that saying had been lacking to our proverbial philosophy your career might well have inspired it. You would probably contend that the end has justified the means; but to my thinking that plea is only acceptable under serious protest. It is quite true that in the distressingly over-crowded condition of the brain-market a man of real power may find it a long and arduous business to ensure a hearing. It is true that an idle and not too cultured society will pay a readier attention to the man who can amuse, than to him who waits his hour to teach, and bides his time with the patient and scornful self-possession usually associated with real talent. The brassy voice that shouts—

“In Folly’s horny tympanum
The thing that makes the wise man dumb,”

has its uses no doubt—to him who cares to use it. It must needs be listened to, applauded by the idle and foolish, and denounced as a nuisance by the thoughtful. But the vote of the first half of the community—though it is usually the bigger half—is surely not worth

having. It is always a degradation to the man who gets it, and it never remains long with him, for every day Folly is justified of some new child more attractive to her devotees than any former birth ; and it disgusts the thoughtful contingent altogether. The performing dog gets a bad name, and is not easily credited with the capacity of useful work among the intellectual gorse and stubble. The sterling and legitimate success you have at last made might have come much earlier had you been content to build it on a sounder and less meretricious foundation. Your pursuit of notoriety was too successful, and held you back from the attainment of fame and all the solid comforts and advantages fame brings. How much wrong it had done to your personal nature, to your instincts and breeding as a gentleman, was abundantly shown by the famous cigarette incident on the first night of "Lady Windermere's Fan." You were, I hope, the one man alive in England capable of at once scoring so deserved a success and besmirching it by so petty an act of ill-bred braggadocio. It was not merely ill-bred, it was futile, and more than futile, as an advertisement. Had the play been a failure, the ill-considered insult to your audience might then have made a little extra talk among the silliest of their number, and so have kept about you that very dubious aureole you were so long content to wear. But it had not failed. It had posed you as one of the figures of intelligent London. Surely at such a moment you might have risen above such a mountebank trick, and have recognised that to be a successful dramatist it is not necessary to cease to be a gentleman.

The unworthy cheapening of your own personality in which you indulged has left its mark upon your work, and will, I fear, long continue to be apparent there. It is not that "Lady Windermere's Fan" was wholly, and "A Woman of No Importance" is to a great degree, languidly cynical in tone. The section of society you have chosen to observe and reproduce quite justifies your scheme of treatment. But, while one of the chief charms of the stage pictures you have drawn is their verisimilitude, it is in direct ratio with the lassitude and cynicism of the figures which people them. You have wisely refrained from attempting to depict a world wholly given over to the lusts of the flesh and of the intellect, but I cannot keep back an obtruding idea that you have done so, not because you have either a quick eye or a very ready appreciation for moral goodness : but merely and purely because one or two passably decent people are absolutely necessary in a drama intended for public performance in this latter half of the nineteenth century. But, while your *roués* and cynics, male and female, are drawn with an admirable sureness of touch and a really wonderful wealth of detail, your good people, whose office it is to furnish them their necessary relief, are, characteristically considered, mere shapes and dummies, feeble reproductions of worn out types never too well observed originally—*des poncifs faits de chic*. Contrast Lord and Lady Windermere with Mrs. Erlynne, or the Arbuthnots, mother and son and Hester Worsley with Lord Illingworth. Hester Worsley is the dismallest of failures. She is

not even a woman, let alone a typical woman, and certainly is not typical of any phase of womanhood known in America. She is a literal translation from the French, the bloodless, mechanical *jeune personne* of Scribe and Sardou. Gerald Arbuthnot is nobody, his mother is nobody, even in the hands of Mrs. Bernard Beere, an actress of rare and galvanic capacity. Mrs. Erlynne remains by far your best character, an inspiration which may alone suffice to keep your name in the list of British dramatists for a generation or two, worthy to stand by the side of Balzac's *Fedora* as a flesh and blood type of the "Society" of her day. Her mingling of cynicism and tenderness, her affection for her child, which is strong enough to induce her to risk the failure of the only ambition she is capable of knowing, the ambition to reinstate herself in the society which has ostracised her, and yet not sufficiently strong to make her desire her daughter's knowledge and affection, all these are indicated with the hand of a master. The crowning stroke of cynicism, her marriage with the silly old lord, was at once as true and as bold as anything this century has to show in the way of drama. What she is to "Lady Windermere's Fan," Lord Illingworth, with a far less measure of success, attempts to be in the piece now running at the Haymarket. That he does not reach her level of characteristic excellence is certainly no fault of Mr. Tree's, for among all the striking impersonations we owe to him he has given us none more perfect in artistic quietude and truth to nature. He misses no point you enable him to make, and makes many obviously of his own conception. Nor would it be generous to reproach you with the partial failure of the character as contrasted with that of Mrs. Erlynne. Nobody is perpetually at his best, and it would be too much to expect that every drama from your pen should contain a study of character as complete and efficient as that which made the fortune of "Lady Windermere's Fan." Lord Illingworth, though he stands on a lower level than Mrs. Erlynne, is a very respectable creation. His main fault is that he is too exclusively typical, and is very imperfectly individualised, less a cynic than a typification of cynicism. He talks vastly too much for effect, and one cannot help thinking that if the play lasted for another act he would be in grave danger of developing into a bore. He is the Mr. Barlow of immorality, the prig of conversational unconventionality. He goes to pieces woefully in the last act, where he insults Mrs. Arbuthnot, an action so at variance with his character as elaborated by you, and so dramatically futile, that one can only wonder why it is intruded. You did not know him with the absolute knowledge you brought to the construction of Mrs. Erlynne. His personality is less distinct, his story less affecting, his character less surely grasped. And as in each case the character is the play, it is easy to understand why "A Woman of No Importance" is a less satisfactory piece of work than was "Lady Windermere's Fan."

You may find it well, before building your next play, seriously to re-consider the dramatic gospel of which you have proclaimed yourself the exponent. Simplicity of theme is an excellent thing in its

way, no doubt, but there is more than a chance of your coming to wreck upon it. To dramatic excellence one of two virtues is a *sine qua non*—a strong story, or character of unusual interest and veracity. Considering the vast output of imaginative literature, both in fiction and on the stage, it is no wonder that both strong stories and strong characters are rarer than we could wish them to be. The drama which depends on mere event has long since been played out, the drama which depends entirely on character drawing has never been attempted, and could never, I believe, be a very fecund form of art, for every man's experience of his fellow men is necessarily finite, and it is impossible to go on producing new and true types of humanity by the dozen for any length of time. You will probably find it best to take the middle course trodden by the best of your predecessors and contemporaries, and increase your modicum of plot in your next drama. A real story—not a mere cleverly carpentered succession of *outré* and impossible events, but a true human story such as are happening by the thousand about us every day, a little dressed and coloured to fit it to the exigencies of the stage—is a better medium for the display of human passion than the Ibsenish baldness of theme displayed in “A Woman of No Importance.” Brilliant talk is pretty to listen to, no doubt, but one gets tired of the conversational style of the cleverest talker in time, and you have so permeated both the sets of characters you have created with your own personality that your audience has risen from each piece with the same sensation as they would feel after having a set lecture from your lips, pleased, interested, dazzled, but with that sense of repletion which is the first hint of boredom. There is such a thing as the monotony of cleverness, and it is especially likely to make itself felt by a man of your order of mind, with but little breadth or variety of method in his cleverness. In listening to both your pieces I have been strongly reminded of an utterance you put into the mouth of Lord Henry in your novel “Dorian Gray,” to the effect that “our proverbs want re-writing.” That dictum is an exposure of the means by which a good deal of your wit is manufactured, and it would have been wise not to have published it. Paradox is a charming *hors d'œuvre*, but it is the poorest possible substitute for the bread of thought and the wine of passion, and will not long content any large section of the public. If “Lady Windermere's Fan” was anything more than a fluke you must justify its success by following it up with something better than the piece Mr. Tree and his admirable company are now playing. Face, instead of evading, the difficulties of dramatic art, take its practice seriously, respect yourself and your audience, and you have in you the capacity to do good—it may be great—work.

Believe me, Sir, yours sincerely,

THE CANDID FRIEND.



Condensed Dramas.

No. II.—“A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE.”

ACT I.—The Terrace at Hunstanton Chase.

(*Types of the aristocracy and others are scattered about the stage; some seated, others walking over the flower beds or dodging behind trees.*)

Lady Hunstanton (a liberal-minded lady in a large wig. *To herself*): What a charmingly exceptional house-party is mine. Although staying in the country they have no desire to kill anything—except time, for they care for nothing but clever conversation. (*To her guests.*) Ladies and gentlemen, let us now be brilliant till tea time.

Omnes: We will.

Lady H.: And that suggests Subject No. 1, “Afternoon Tea.”

1st Aristocrat: What is afternoon-tea? It is the Insatiable in pursuit of the Indigestible.

2nd Arist.: Or the Intangible washed down by the Taxable.

Nonconformist Democrat (with a property blue book, emerges from behind a flower pot): Pardon me! Afternoon-tea is a Woeful Waste made by a Wilful Want.

Lord Illingworth (a graceful profligate with an imperial and a walking stick appears suddenly from behind a rose-bush): Not at all, it is the Triumph of Appetite over Luncheon, it is also Woman's Weakness and Man's—

Lady H. (interrupting): Thank you. Subject No. 2, “Woman.”

Omnes (eagerly): Woman is——

Lady H.: One at a time, please.

2nd Arist.: Woman is a becoming costume inadequately inhabited.

1st Arist.: She is the Triumph of Matter over Mind, and of Art over Nature.

Lord I.: She is also the Divorceable wooed by the Disreputable.

Lady H.: Thank you. Subject No. 3, “Divorce.”

Lord I.: My pet subject! Divorce, dear lady, is——

Prompter (from the wings, in a loud whisper): Beg your pardon, Mr. Tree, but how about the plot?

Lord I.: Don't interrupt, I am just going to be unusually brilliant, the plot can wait.

Prompter: But she's “specially engaged,” sir.

Lord I. (convinced but annoyed): Oh, bother! Very well then, let the play begin. (*Goes up.*)

Gerald (enters): I am an ingenuous and beardless youth, though I look older. Lord Illingworth has made me his secretary.

Lady H. : Private secretary, you mean.

Gerald : No ; secretary.

Lady H. : Then what I expected has come to pass. Illingworth is too great an undertaking for a single person, so he has turned himself into a joint stock company with you as its secretary.

Hester Worsley (enters) : I am an unconventional American. I have no accent and I despise the aristocracy ; that is why I am staying with them. (*To Gerald.*) Let us flirt.

Gerald : With pleasure. (*They leave flirting.*)

Servant (enters) : Tea is served in the peach and gold Pavilion, my lady.

(*Lady H. and guests rush hurriedly away.*)

Lord I. (detaining 1st Arist.) : Just one proverb before we part *Apropos* of tea, a muffin in the mouth is worth two in the oven—it's cooler.

1st Arist. : Then why not kiss the coy American ?

Lord I. : Is it absolutely necessary ?

1st Arist. : It is the custom of the country house.

Lord I. : Then I'll do it in the third act.

1st Arist. : But a kiss in time saves a long courtship.

Lord I. : Still the road to tea is paved with pink carnations, shall we take it ? (*They are strolling off.*)

Prompter (from the wings) : Hi ! Mr. Tree, stop ! How about bringing down the curtain ?

Lord I. : Ah ! Of course. (*To 1st Arist.*) Pardon me one moment. (*Picks up a note which is naturally lying under a tree.*)

1st Arist. : What is that ?

Lord I. : Part of the plot—mislaid by someone ; but it doesn't really matter, for it's A Plot of No Importance.

(*Curtain.*)

ACT II.—Drawing-room at the Chase.

(*Female types of the aristocracy are conversing with the aid of coffee cups.*)

Hester (at the back to herself) : I will hide behind a chair and be shocked. (*Hides.*)

Lady H. : Now ladies, a little after dinner brilliance, please. No act is complete without it. The usual subjects—No. 1, "Babies."

1st Arist. : A baby is the Shriekable enwrapped in the Washable.

2nd Arist. : And the Smackable amused by the Breakable.

3rd Arist. : It is also the Insatiable in pursuit of the Suckable.

Lady H. : Thank you. No. 2, "Servants."

1st Arist. : The early kitchen-maid catches a cold on the door-step.

2nd Arist. : And sits like Patience on the kitchen table smiling at the policeman.

3rd Arist. : When the wine is in, the butler is found out.

1st Arist. : And the mistress's peccadilloes are the maid's opportunity.

Hester (emerges, quivering with indignation): Shame upon you, proud aristocrats! I am a puritan from the land of Freedom, where there are no babies, because all the children are born grown up. Neither have we servants, but beings who by a strange confusion of terms are called "helps"; therefore I scorn your cynical reflections, and despise you; although when I return to America I shall boast of my acquaintance with you and make the untravelled envious.

Mrs. Arbuthnot (enters unexpectedly through a window): I am a lady with a past tempered by repentance; that is why I am attired in black velveteen. I am also that neglected out-cast, the plot of a Society play. I will now temporarily efface myself. (*Does so.*)

(*Noblemen and other aristocrats enter from dining-room.*)

Lady H.: So glad you've joined us. We will now be funny conventionally. Archdeacon, you are a comic clergyman with a sick wife. Amuse us with an inventory of her symptoms.

Lord I. (to himself): Confound that parson! Here am I the management bursting with epigram, and yet the author—after all what is an author? A genial joker with a cigarette in one hand and a note book in the other. Good! I'll work it off presently.

(*Archdeacon concludes his diagnostic catalogue.*)

Lord I. (to himself): Now's my time. (*To the company.*) Talking of divorce—(*catches sight of Mrs. Arbuthnot who emerges*) there's that Plot again. (*Despairingly.*) It's no use.

Gerald (enters): Mother!

Lord I. (to Gerald): Introduce us, and let the play proceed. (*They are introduced.*)

Lord I. (starts and strikes an attitude): 'Tis she!

Mrs. Arb. (starts and strikes an attitude): 'Tis he!

Lady H. (watching them, to herself): They are standing in constrained attitudes, so they evidently want the stage. (*To the company.*) We are pining for a little music; we can't have it here because there is a grand piano in the room. Let us then proceed to the Albert Hall and hear an oratorio.

(*Guests depart in a well-bred hurry.*)

Lord I.: I want my son.

Mrs. Arb.: Why?

Lord I.: I am a brilliant but irrelevant talker, so I require a constant companion who will lead up to my jokes. Gerald is a simple soul, and will do it beautifully.

Mrs. Arb. (bitterly): There was a time when it was I who was your creature. For your sake I ransacked literature, ancient and modern, to furnish you with after dinner fireworks; and my lips were ever ready to curl into giggles at your lightest chestnut. And what was my reward? (*Pointedly.*) You know. So my answer is—Never! (*Gallery wake up and applaud. Lord I. temporarily effaces himself.*)

Gerald (enters): Mother!

Mrs. Arb. : You must not be Lord Illingworth's secretary, he is a bad man.

Gerald : Mother !

Mrs. Arb. : I will tell you a story. There was once a young and beautiful girl who acted as social claque and joke finder to that aristocratic epigrammatist, Lord Illingworth. One day in a moment of temporary abstraction she laughed in the wrong place, and he—he cast her off for ever ! What do you say to that ?

Gerald : I think, Mother—she must, Mother—have been a very dull person, Mother.

Mrs. Arb. : Dull ! Oh heavens ! (*Reels and then recovers.*) Enough, I withdraw my objections. Be thou the bad man's secretary.

Lord I. (*emerges from temporary effacement*) : Come along, Gerald. Here is a little list of questions I want you to ask me in the next act. I love you, Gerald—(*shakes him by the shoulders to show his affection*)—so look them over. (*They leave.*)

(*Quick curtain.*)

ACT III.—The Hall at the Chase.

Lord Illingworth and Gerald are discovered making a night of it alone.

Lord I. : Your duties, my dear Gerald, will be quite simple. You will pose as an innocent youth eager for social knowledge. Here is a list of subjects (*handing paper*) upon which I have, with infinite labour, elaborated witticisms ; and when occasion arises you will have to lead up to them. Let us now rehearse.

Gerald (*consulting paper*) : A neat neck-tie is important, Lord Illingworth, isn't it ?

Lord I. : There is nothing Important but the Unimportant ; there is no neck-tie so tied as the untied ; but to be untidy is social oblivion, for "Time and Tide wait for no man." Next, please.

Gerald : Matrimony is very pleasant, Lord Illingworth, isn't it ?

Lord I. : Pleasant, my dear Gerald, is another word for commonplace. It is only the Irritating that is endurable. Matrimony is unendurable. It is a vulgar middle-class amusement—a man and a woman caught in a storm and waiting for an omnibus to the Divorce Court. Now for No. 3.

Gerald (*smothering a yawn*) : Dining out is an agreeable amusement, Lord Illingworth, isn't it ?

Lord I. : The only real amusement, my dear Gerald, is a society play with a conventional plot. To Dine is Dyspepsia, but to go dinnerless is Death. Better is a dinner of courses with a French cook than a high tea with a Nonconformist conscience.

(*Mrs. Arbuthnot enters from nowhere in particular.*)

Gerald (*as usual*) : Mother !

Lord I. (*to himself*) : Confound it ! Here's old velveteen again ! I never knew such a persistent plot. No more brilliance this act, so

I will go and kiss the Puritan and get it over. (*Leaves hurriedly, delighted to have found a plausible reason for leaving the stage.*)

Gerald : Mother !

Mrs. Arb. : My boy ! Still bent upon ambition ? Better to be clerk in an imaginary bank than joke-jackal to a profligate peer.

Hester (*enters in a state of great indignation, followed by Lord Illingworth*) : Gerald, I love you ; Lord Illingworth has insulted me. I was walking with him in the dark with his arm round my waist, when suddenly and without first asking my permission, he kissed me.

Gerald : Villain ! (*Gallery again wakes up.*) I was told that you were a profligate, and I esteemed you. I heard that you had ruined many happy homes and I revered you ; but now that you have bestowed an unsolicited salute upon an American citizen I propose to thrash you within an inch of your life (*gallery wide awake and expectant*), so clear a ring, mother, and hold my coat.

Mrs. Arb. (*to herself*) : Now for an effective curtain. (*With pardonable pride.*) This, I think is my situation.

Gerald (*squaring up to Lord I.*) : Come on !

Mrs. Arb. (*throwing herself between them in the approved fashion*) : Gerald, forbear ! If thou wouldst strike anything, let it be an attitude, for he, Lord Illingworth, is thy father !

(*Sensation, group, and curtain.*)

ACT IV.—Sitting-room at Mrs. Arbuthnot's.

(*Through the window can be seen the picturesque and moss-covered Bank in which Gerald is a clerk.*)

Hester (*appears at window*) : As I am a puritan with a passion for truth and honesty, I will hide at the back and listen to the conversation. (*Hides.*)

(*Lady Hunstanton and 1st Aristocrat enter.*)

Lady H. : I wonder why we are on in this act.

1st Arist. : To supply the usual brilliance, of course.

Lady H. : Then say something clever and irrelevant and we'll go.

1st Arist. : Lord Illingworth's umbrella is like Charity—it covers a multitude of sins.

Lady H. : Thank you. How scintillating ! Now we'll go. (*They depart.*)

(*Mrs. Arbuthnot and Gerald enter.*)

Gerald : Mother ! Never put off till to-morrow what you ought to have done twenty years ago ; so marry Lord Illingworth to-day, Mother.

Mrs. Arb. : Gerald, I have read "Beau Austin," and therefore I decline.

Gerald : Then will I write a letter and leave it on the table, where Lord Illingworth will see it when he calls. (*Does so.*)

Hester (*appears*) : I have heard all. (*To Mrs. Arb.*) I also admire

Henley and Stevenson, and I applaud your resolution. I love you, Gerald, let us all go to the Chicago Exhibition !

Gerald : We will. Come into the garden and secure berths. (*They leave.*)

Lord I. (*enters in a check suit which can be heard for miles*) : Rachel, I have been reading the works of the Lytton before last, and I yearn for my son.

Mrs. Arb. : Never !

Lord I. (*takes up Gerald's letter and reads it*) : "Lord Illingworth, you must marry my mother!" How very odd ! That never occurred to me before. Rachel, I don't love you, but be my *ex post facto* bride.

Mrs. Arb. (*with renewed energy, feeling that the scene is hers*) : Never !

Lord I. (*reels and recovers*) : But why do you reject my suit ?

Mrs. Arb. : Why ! Because you appear to have bought it in the Tottenham Court Road.

Lord I. (*takes off his gloves and with great foresight places them on the table*) : Then farewell ! (*Going.*)

Mrs. Arb. (*contemptuously*) : What a feeble exit !

Lord I. : True ; but what can I do ?

Mrs. Arb. : Do ! Insult me like a man and give me a chance.

Lord I. : With pleasure. Let me see ! Would you consider it offensive if I referred to you as my mistress ?

Mrs. Arb. (*defiantly*) : Try it !

Lord I. : I will. (*Does so.*)

(*Mrs. Arb. strikes him across the face with the conveniently placed glove.*)

Lord I. : Thank you. (*Reels, starts, staggers, glares, then rolls his eyes and turns a back somersault through the door.*)

(*The gallery rises to Mrs. Arbuthnot.*)

Mrs. Arb. (*with an air of proud satisfaction*) : Ah ! I think that woke 'em up a bit. I wasn't specially engaged for nothing.

(*Gerald and Hester appear at window.*)

Mrs. Arb. (*angrily*) : Go away, you're an anti-climax to a Play of No Importance.

(*Curtain.*)

W. R. W.



Plays of the Month.

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE."

A new and original play, in four acts, by OSCAR WILDE.

First produced at the Haymarket Theatre on Wednesday evening, April 19th, 1893.

Lord Illingworth ..	Mr. TREE.	Francis	Mr. MONTAGU.
Sir John Pontefract ..	Mr. HOLMAN CLARK.	Lady Hunstanton ..	Miss ROSE LECLERCQ
Lord Alfred Rufford ..	Mr. LAWFORD.	Lady Caroline Pontefract .. .	Miss LE THIÈRE.
Mr. Kelvil, M.P. . .	Mr. ALLAN.	Lady Stutfield .. .	Miss HORLOCK.
The Ven. James Daubeny, D.D. (Rector of Wrookley) .. .	Mr. KEMBLE.	Mrs. Allonby .. .	Mrs. TREE.
Gerald Arbuthnot ..	Mr. FRED TERRY.	Hester Worsley .. .	Miss JULIA NEILSON.
Farquhar	Mr. HAY.	Alice	Miss KELLY.
		Mrs. Arbuthnot .. .	Mrs. BERNARD BEERE.

Wordsworth wrote, anticipating the difficulties that would arise over Mr. Wilde, no doubt,

"And you must love him ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love."

No lines could better meet the case. Here is a gentleman of audacious, almost of affrighting, cleverness, and with all the desire in the world to relish him and it one feels repulsed, one's teeth are set on edge, at every turn. It arises solely from Mr. Wilde's misconception of his vocation. Nature intended him for a snapper-up of well-considered trifles—a second Molière, Shakespeare even—in this relation. "Instead of which" he goes about pursuing a new and diabolical form of comic relief. Strip this gaudy *Woman* of her trimmings, the flashy frippery of Wildese; reduce her to a state of simple nature; and she is found clothed, and very picturesquely clothed, in flesh and blood. Mrs. Arbuthnot was in youth—according to her son's dictum—not a "really nice" woman. She permitted her lover a dangerous license, and when he finally threw her over, there was a child to intensify her shame. Years of seclusion follow. Her son reaches the threshold of manhood. For his sake she timidly ventures again into the world. At the first step she is confronted by her boy's would-be patron—her betrayer. He is *blasé*, vicious, irredeemable, but has conceived a genuine fondness for the lad. That fondness deepens when he learns that Gerald is his son. The mother rejects his patronage with scorn, but is compelled to acquiesce under fear of Gerald's getting to know the truth. An accident, however, brings the story to light. Lord Illingworth always kisses women who lecture him—"it's such a surprise for them"—so when a New England Puritan lectures him, he kisses her. American though she is, she cannot stand that, and cries out against the insult. Gerald, who loves her, is anxious to administer a horsewhipping; but his mother shields the osculatory peer, exclaiming, "Gerald, he is your father!" The son's desire to have his mother righted by marriage with her betrayer is combatted by the Puritan, who insists that this would mean only further degradation for Mrs. Arbuthnot, and when Lord Illingworth comes in all sincerity to sue for his impulsive son, he comes to court failure. Nothing will shake the decision of this woman he has lightly referred to as "of no importance." She declines to influence her boy at any price. His father's tardy love must go hungering. Not even the title and station of Lady Illingworth attract

her. Only when the baffled brute loses his temper and calls her "mistress" is she shaken. Then she strikes him in the face, and the "man of no importance" slinks ignominiously from the scene. All this, in outline, is excellent drama, and the climax reaches a high level of rightness—ethical and dramatic. But the manner of treating it is abominable. Three parts of every act save the last are devoted to verbal fence, to what Mr. Wilde and his admirers consider play of wit. That is to say, perverted Tupperisms are fired off at the rate of a score to the minute, like bullets from a machine-gun, scarce one in a dozen finding its billet, and all betraying their mould and leaden origin. Then, five minutes before the curtain falls each time comes a quickening of the action, a strong situation, and just sufficient advance in the story to carry one languidly on to the next scene. Not a play, but a stodge of Wilde, leavened by a pinch of human nature, it is just as audacious an exploitation of the author at the expense of a *posse* of brilliant players, as was ever effected in those early days of cheaper methods, of lilies and long hair and green paletots. Such interest as is inspired is due to the players, and of them, first and foremost, to Mr. Tree. Lord Illingworth is a creature of irreconcilable inconsistencies. A man of his calibre, outraging and intriguing on every side, loftily indifferent to ties and affections of every kind, is not of a piece with Richard Feverel, to whom, when he learns he is a father, "Nature Speaks." The author's failure is, however, the actor's triumph. Lord Illingworth, as Mr. Tree draws him, is by hook and by crook made almost human, and entirely fascinating. To the courtly insolence of Beau Austin he adds the distinction of Guisebury and infuses a spice of Mephistopheles delightfully piquant and bracing. As usual the actor gets within the part. His wickedness and wit seem part and parcel of the man, and the grip of the actor almost compels belief in the sincerity of the profligate's ridiculous conversion, and the reality of those moments of feeling (masterly touched in by Mr. Tree) which precede his defeat and dismissal. A long way after Mr. Tree, but admirable also in her way, is Mrs. Beere. Never herself quite carried, or carrying others, away—a little hard even in her melting moments—the actress yet gives beauty, dignity and passion to the part, and plays with rare dexterity. Miss Neilson and Mr. Terry are neither of them well suited. Both seem oppressed by a sense that girlhood and boyhood and the unconscious artlessness of extreme youth are beyond them. But no words could praise too highly the boundless humour of Miss Leclercq as a worldly old woman without whom the play would be well-nigh intolerable, or the airy flippancy and ingenuous audacities of the society butterfly of Mrs. Tree. These were examples of high comedy perfect of their kind, and showing all the brighter by contrast with the more conventional though scarcely less amusing methods of Miss Le Thiere and Mr. Kemble. The acting indeed performs a miracle and provides compensation well-nigh sufficient for the disappointments of the play, and Mr. Wilde's vogue receives an incalculable impulse from the association of his work with that of the Haymarket company and Mr. Tree.

"JEALOUS IN HONOUR."

A new and original play, in four acts, by BASIL BROKE.

First produced at the Garrick Theatre on Thursday afternoon, April 27th, 1893.

Prince Newski	Mr. BERNARD GOULD.	Mr. Nugent	Mr. SYDNEY BROUGH.
Count Von Bohrer ..	Mr. EDMUND MAURICE.	Mrs. Strange	Mrs. EDMUND PHELPS.
Comte de Cerny	Mr. GILBERT HARE.	Alice Ferrers	Miss HELEN LUCK.
Colonel Strange	Mr. SAINT MATTHEWS.	Helen, Comtesse de ..	Miss KATE RORKE.
Hugh Ferrers	Mr. W. T. LOVELL.	Cerny	

The Countess de Cerny has been deserted by the Count because the matrimonial ceremony was invalid, and the Count is a villain. A son is born, and for his sake the Countess desires the union completed. Her father has an electric gun, which will upset the balance of power in Europe, and the Count wants it for the French Government. To get it he consents to legalise the Countess's position and legitimatise his offspring. German and Russian agents are in attendance to bid for the treasure, and the inventive Colonel is not indifferent to the claims of his own country; but, recognising that but for the gun he would have looked more carefully after his daughter's interests, and therefore that it wrought the harm, he yields to the Count's demands. A convenient enemy, with a convenient skill in the *duello*, then claims the Count and disposes of him, leaving the heroine free to mate with the handsome young Englishman of her later choice. The play, though considerably above the *matinée* level, owed everything to its interpreters. Not for many a season has a scratch performance been on so high a level. Miss Rorke, acting with that absolute freedom from self-consciousness, that womanly charm, and emotional force in which she stands without a rival, drew the tenderest picture of the youthful Countess. Mr. Gilbert Hare as the rascally Count revealed an unsuspected sense of character and a keen appreciation of the value of finish. Full of detail, often of an unstagey order, the sketch was, if a little out of drawing here and there, a highly entertaining and most promising piece of work. An unusual touch of dignity rescued Mr. Saint Matthews' electrician-Colonel from the contempt that was his due. And Mr. Edmund Maurice, as the German emissary, added another gauche and guttural German to the little company of diverting foreigners he has lately been engaged in modelling. Down to the smallest part the play was most carefully interpreted, and the net result of the afternoon was the presentation of the gross receipts to an excellent charity, and the enjoyment of exceptionally brisk and interesting acting.

"ALAN'S WIFE."

An original Study, in three scenes, by an Anonymous author, founded on a story by ELIN AMEEN. First produced at Terry's Theatre by the Independent Theatre Society on Friday evening, April 25th, 1893.

Jean Creyke	Miss E. ROBINS.	Jamie Warren	Mr. JAMES WELCH.
Mrs. Holroyd	Mrs. E. H. BROOKE.	Colonel Stewart	Mr. M. HERAPATH.
Mrs. Ridley	Mrs. EDMUND PHELPS.	Roberts	Mr. WALLER.
First Woman	Miss MABEL HARDY.	1st Warder	Mr. CHARLES GREEVEN.
Second Woman	Miss ANNIE SAKK.	2nd Warder	Mr. E. G. WALLER.

Founded on a story by Elin Ameen, this episode in three scenes at once takes rank as a morsel of dramatic work terrible in directness and power. Judged by the usual tests it must be pronounced a play—a very remarkable play. It lives, it moves, emphatically it has its being. Nothing is extenuate; nor is aught set down in malice. From the opening to the close remorselessly it makes for its logical conclusion—its climax of appalling tragedy. Nevertheless, although it satisfies these requirements of art, it must be set outside the boundaries of art, as too pitiless, too painful a reflection of the facts of life. Jean Creyke is the wife of a workman half Apollo,

half Hercules. His beauty and strength are her pride. She exults in the thought that six months hence her child will be born in his image. There is a murmur outside. Frightened women announce an accident up at the works. A stretcher is borne in, a shapeless something on it hidden by a cloak. It is her husband, mangled, dead. She uncovers the corpse and falls fainting at the hideous spectacle she sees. In scene two, the child has been born, a misshapen cripple. The mother faces the prospect of its future, a life of mockery, of uselessness, of miserable dependence. She resolves to save it from this doom, and first baptising it after the fashion of Mr. Hardy's Tess, she smothers it in its cradle. In scene three, the condemned woman suffers the agony of a farewell interview with her broken-hearted mother, and goes gladly to her death, happy in the belief that the murder of her child was the one supremely virtuous act of her life. Hopeless, harrowing, horrible, the tragedy proved distressing in the last degree, and called forth some passionate protests against the exhibition on the stage of the crude horrors of existence. Miss Robins bore the burden of the piece and informed with piteous truth her study of the anguish-stricken mother. For precision, for richness of colouring, for haunting naturalness, this remarkable actress has long been celebrated; but nothing she has done can be compared with her heartrending Jean. Not even the fact that the murder seemed the direct result of logical reasoning, arrived at in defiance of the dictates of affection and the impulse of a mother, could interfere with the actress's supremacy. While she was on the stage, it was impossible to call in question the reasonableness of her actions, and the impression created by the piece, a very extraordinary and ineffaceable impression, was almost solely due to her inspired performance. The grief of the aged mother was made intensely affecting by Mrs. Brooke, clever Mrs. Edmund Phelps was a garrulous gossip of familiar pattern, and Mr. Welch, the immortal Lickcheese, played with singular discretion and dignity a diffident village parson. The tragedy was preceded by a duologue, "Theory and Practice," by Mr. Arthur Benham, a trite but not unamusing exercise in playwriting, on the threadbare theme of the "The Happy Pair" and a score more of popular comediettas. It was acted with some briskness and humour by Miss Estelle Burney and Mr Bassett Roe.

"MAM'ZELLE NITOUCHE."

A musical comedy, in three acts, by MM. HENRI MEILHAC and ALBERT MILLAUD.
 Revived in London at the Trafalgar Square Theatre on Saturday evening, May 6th, 1893.

Major	Mr. ROBERT PATEMAN.	Celestin	Mr. FRANK WYATT.
Fernand de Champlatreau	Mr. W. BROWNLOW.	Mdlle. Corinne	Miss V. MELNOTTE.
Gustave	Mr. GEO. HUMPHREY.	Gimblette	Miss DORA THORNE.
Loriot	Mr. JOHN WILLES.	Sylvia	Miss F. MELVILLE.
First Soldier	Mr. DUDLEY GATES.	The Lady Superior of the Convent	Miss ELSIE CHESTER.
Stage-manager of the Pontarcy Theatre	Mr. ARTHUR PLAYFAIR.	The Janitress	Miss DELIA CARLYLE.
Call-boy	Mr. A. H. BROOKE.	Denise de Flavigny	Miss MAY YOHE.

Nitouche, otherwise Denise de Flavigny, was designed for Judic, and in due time fell into the expressive hands of Lotta. Nine years ago the quaint little American appeared as the demure convent girl at the Opera Comique. Her famous back-kick—modified by Mr. Wyndham when he played old comedy "in a modern spirit"—had something to do with her success in the part, which demands incongruity, variety, and an inexhaustible fund of "go." On the whole, however, she was not so well equipped as Nitouche the Third, Miss Yohe. This very vivacious actress at once leapt into favour in the

part. Her tireless spirits, her rich fresh voice, the feverish energy of her electrical style at once challenged attention, compelled amusement and extorted admiration. Unmitigated silliness is the characteristic of the piece—a jumble of exaggerated conventionalism flanked by distorted Bohemianism—but the actress is equal to gracing the petty and obscuring the inane. Combining in herself the *chic* of Miss Kate Munroe, the cheery dash of Miss Farren, and the polished methods of Mdme. Selina Dolaro, Miss May Yohe is an important acquisition to the London stage, and for bringing her thus prominently forward the clumsy stupidities of “Nitouche” may be excused. At other points this feeble *omnium gatherum* of comic opera conventions was forcibly acted. To the adventures of Nitouche’s chance companions, the devout convent organist who writes an opera *bouffe*, the naughty *prima donna* never an hour free from tantrums, her jealous lover the thrasonical blustering Major, the military tenor fond and true, and the fuming, fussing theatrical manager, the actors gave all possible point. One section of the audience found delirious delight in Mr. Playfair’s imitation of Mr. George Edwardes. Another, with better reason, applauded to the echo Mr. Wyatt’s clever drolleries and nimble dancing. A third, with best reason of all, hailed with acclamation Mr. Pateman’s irresistible picture of the elderly fire-eating flirt, a model of restrained humour, a perfect example of what an actor in comic opera (as distinct from a comic opera actor) can do. So that everyone found something to approve, and being good naturedly engaged in contemplating that the shambling plot, the shakey foundations, the jingling tunes passed unnoticed. Following “Nitouche,” came Mr. Burnand’s “Diplunacy,” the famous travestie of Sardou’s “Diplomacy,” but, alas, without its well-remembered glitter and glamour of fun. “Where are the snows of yester year?” enquires the poet. Where are the riotous spirits which once made “Diplunacy” the talk of London? enquires the disillusioned playgoer. Time was when M. Marius as Orloff, with his Bancroftian carriage of head and hat could set and keep the merry Strand of those fifteen years’ old days in a roar. Time was when every stiff-backed attitude of Miss Lottie Venne, recalling Mrs. Bancroft’s Zicka, sent stalls and pit into unholy ecstasies of joy. How brilliant all those mimics were in ’78, how dull their imitators are in ’93! Mr. Forbes Robertson is too tough a nut for drolls to crack. His Scarpia brought Mr. Arthur Roberts to the dust, his Beauchere spoils Mr. Playfair’s splendid record. So too with Miss Rorke and her supremely natural style. But Miss Nethersole, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, Mr. Hare, and better still Lady Monckton, surely present angles enough for the mimic to make happy use of. Miss Irene Rickards it is true suggested now and then the sinuous serpent of Miss Nethersole, and Mr. Wyatt only spoiled his Bancroft by over-doing him; but the rest were nought. Mr. J. Willes alone redeemed his reputation. His Arthur Cecil, Baron Stein, had the true touch of observation, mimicry and caricature. This was the one admirable thing in the revival, which in all else was disappointing, tedious and dull.

"FORBIDDEN FRUIT."

Revival of the three-act farcical comedy by DION BOUTICAULT.
At the Vaudeville Theatre, Saturday, May 6th, 1893.

Mr. Serjeant Buster ..	Mr. LIONEL RIGNOLD.	Tom	Mr. S. BURT.
Mr. Cato Dove	Mr. CHARLES GROVES.	Ginger	Master SHAW.
Captain Derringer ..	Mr. H. REEVES-SMITH.	Conductor	Mr. LEWIS.
Poldi	Mr. J. NORTHCOTE.	Mrs. Cato Dove ..	Miss NORREYS.
Swalbach	Mr. JULIAN CROSS.	Mrs. Arabella Buster	Miss MAGGIE DUGGAN.
Victor	Mr. MARK PATON.	Julia Perkins .. .	Miss DAISY ENGLAND.
Joseph	Mr. H. DIXON.	Zulu	Miss LOTTIE VENNE.

Cremorne is no more; but they who once sparked and gallivanted in its shady supper-rooms and notorious arcades still, like remorseful ghosts, perambulate the stage, living their wicked lives over again for our edification and warning. "Pink Dominos" (and the poor) we have always with us, and this fact weighed no doubt with the Messrs. Gatti, when the tragic demise of "Uncle John" set them examining their shelves and dusting down half-forgotten masterpieces in their desperate search for a successor. If there is always a public for the famous Criterion farce, they doubtless argued, why not a following for Dion Boucicault's adaptation from the same original. "Forbidden Fruit" and Mr. Albery's bell-book-and-candle cursed frivolity are brother and sister, and the fortune that falls to the one should by right be shared in by the other. This was not the case when the former play was produced at the Adelphi thirteen years ago. It won some boisterous laughter; but held the boards for but a brief time. Perhaps the theatre was not exactly suited to broad farce. Maybe the actors were a trifle cumbersome in style. Anyway its success was nothing to boast of. But at the Vaudeville conditions are altered. Theatre and company alike are in favour of the piece. The story—threadbare though it be—of two resourceful barristers who lie through thick and thin to their respective trustful wives in order to spend a wild night in some disreputable place, is made the most of by everyone concerned. Mr. Groves is no Hawtrey, still less is he a Wyndham, but his sobriety is just as valuable to a play of this kind as their effervescence and exaggeration. Mr. Lionel Rignold's is a different case. He is effective too, but not through sticking close to probabilities. His method is to employ traditional means of getting a laugh. The experienced low comedian, not the rowdy Sergeant, is his model. His end is attained with equal sureness, but the way to it bears no comparison with his fellow actor's. The gem of the performance is, however, Miss Venne's Zulu. For an "artiste" of the trapeze, a loud lady of personal attractions, a Polly Eccles boldly vulgarised, no one has an eye like Miss Venne. She sees the humour even of their clothes, and for an actress that is quite astonishing. The "India Rubber Girl" was beautiful; but Zulu is bewitching—at a distance. It is not the least of Miss Venne's virtues in this part that she makes one feel—with Byron—that people of this sort are to be loved, but only when they are not too near. Miss Duggan, forsaking burlesque and comic opera, makes an imposing Mrs. Buster, and supplies an admirable foil for Miss Norreys, whose gentle cooing Mrs. Dove is another characteristic study of the winsome amenable regarded by most Englishmen as the ideal wife. Mr. Cross as usual discloses rough humour and experience as a German waiter: Mr. Reeves-Smith repeats a familiar impersonation as a pleasant young Englishman; and Miss Daisy England reveals genuine low comedy talent as a barmaid. One suggestion there is to make in connection with the piece. Since Cremorne is out of date, why not make the farce so too. Mr. Wyndham very properly threw back "London

Assurance" into the era of strap trousers and shoulder cloaks. Mr. Benson does the same with "Money." Why should not Cremorne and all these past and done with institutions be set in a similar frame, and additional interest thus be given to old plays by forgotten fashions and quaint costumes.

"THE GREAT UNPAID."

A farcical comedy in three acts, by FRED HORNER, adapted from ALEXANDRE BISSON'S "La Famille Pont-Biquet."

First produced at the Comedy Theatre on Tuesday evening, May 9th, 1893.

Montague Clements ..	Mr. W. H. VERNON.	Constable	Mr. H. LOWTHER.
C. Knight-Williams ..	Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.	Mrs. Knight-Williams	Miss M. A. VICTOR.
Plantagenet Watts ..	Mr. H. V. ESMOND.	Mrs. Montague	} Miss MARY RORKE.
Herbert Somerset ..	Mr. E. W. GARDINER.	Clements	
Henry Pettifer	Mr. WILFRED SHINE.	Eva Knight-Williams	Miss ANNIE HILL
Wurzel	Mr. FRANK WOOD.	Grace Walters	Miss B. FERRAR.
Bouillabaisse	Mr. H. DE LANGE.		

There is just one new and original notion in the Bisson farce to which Mr. Horner has turned his adaptive genius, and a very quaint notion it is. An amorous J.P. of uncertain years, whenever he perpetrates or is on the verge of perpetrating a gallantry, becomes deaf. That is the notion—one which gives the actor every facility for getting effects—since to be deaf is simply to wear an expressionless face and talk with a louder voice than usual—and which at the same time endears him to an audience rejoiced beyond measure at seeing old gentlemen in a tight place. But one idea no more makes a farce than one "century" makes a county cricketer, and the magisterial reprobate goes but a short way towards saving "The Great Unpaid." On thinking the plot over, no particular reason appears for its failure to amuse. Perhaps it is too late a day for stories of imbecile friends who peril their domestic happiness by pulling other people's chestnuts out of the fire, and setting their jealous wives ablaze by mysterious visits to dubious females—all on account of their brothers-in-law. But an uncomfortable feeling obtrudes itself that plays are no longer rejected on their merits—that had this been a "Daly comedy" instead of a "Horner farce"—had Miss Rehan played the suspicious wife, and Mrs. Gilbert the vain old doggerel maker, and Mr. John Drew the too complacent friend, and Mr. Lewis the infirm adorer—a hundred nights' run in place of a paltry and pitiable ten might have rewarded the adapter. Certainly far weaker plays than this have returned a handsome dividend to their exploiters; but in all the instances that come readily to mind the popular element was strong in the company. It were ungracious to insist at length upon this, for Mr. Horner's cast was excellent. No more accomplished comedian exists than Mr. Vernon. He is the admirable Crichton of the English stage. Consul Bernick, Henry VIII., Sir Horace Welby, he can compass them all, and still reserve a distinct style for light Wyndhamish farce. Nothing comes amiss to him, and his sketch of the seriously involved middle-aged innocent was all that could be wished. So too with Mr. Maude as the elderly J.P., with Mr. Esmond as a "Man Fish" (a remarkably original suggestion of character, even for this original actor), with Miss Victor as the mature poetess of romantic inclinations, with Miss Mary Rorke as the perturbed wife. But still the impression remains that another theatre or another company—not necessarily a stronger one—might have carried "The Great Unpaid" to a success such as a dozen weaker farces have in recent times enjoyed.

To vary the monotony of months and months of genial swindling as "Walker, London," Mr. Toole on May 3rd eked out a *matinée* of "Dot" with a sketch by Mr. Joseph Hatton called "Homburg." His Caleb Plummer was as ever a truthful and touching representation of one of Dickens's most tenderly drawn characters. Most of Mr. Toole's comic efforts fade speedily from the memory. His Caleb Plummer never will. It testifies, as do none of his Paul Prys, Artful Cards, Sprigginises, Chawleises, "got-a-'our-to-get-my-dinner-in"'s, and the like—humble founders of his fame and fortune!—to the actor's possession of an artist's instinct and an artist's hand. And but for the re-introduction of those spangled and *blanc-de-perle*d fairies—how Dickens would rail at them could he see them now!—this revival, with its admirable homely Dot of Miss Kate Phillips and its bluff John Peerybingle of Mr. Billington, might take rank as a genuine example of artistic work. Far otherwise was the novelty. This entails no reflection upon its author. Mr. Hatton has evidently worked with his hands tied. All that was required of him was a framework, into which Mr. Toole could fit his own personality, and this Mr. Hatton has provided. Mr. Toole is at Homburg, anxious to avoid recognition. He pretends to be a Manchester man, a Glasgow merchant, and so on, but deceives no one—the piece thus oddly enough resolving itself into a kind of demonstration that the comedian cannot act, at any rate off the stage—about the last thing in the world that an actor would wish to establish. Such a piece affords Mr. Toole opportunities only for being Mr. Toole, and though certain accessories had an interest of their own—imitations of actors who are now names merely, Buckstone, Mathews, Phelps, and Fechter, and an exhibition of what for ages has done duty on the stage as the Scottish tongue—there was little to please other than curiosity hunters.

At the Royalty Miss Achurch revived "Adrienne Lecouvreur" on April 26th, but new part to her though the actress-heroine was, the effort hardly calls for more extended notice than Mr. Irving's later revivals at the Lyceum of "Louis XI." and "The Lyons Mail," in which he shone once again with unabated if not unapproachable brilliancy. Miss Achurch scarcely did more than re-disclose the glaring fact that she is singularly ill-advised. Surrounded by a company absolutely unequal to the task of creditably rendering Scribe and Legouvé's classic melodrama—a play far too weak to stand alone—the actress was compelled to redouble her exertions merely to sustain respectful attention. Under more favourable conditions Miss Achurch might—nay, after her Nora and her Stephanie de Mohrivart it were safe to say would assuredly—have done better, but hampered on every side by colourless incompetents she speedily lost all sense of proportion, and proffered an Adrienne now tame, now passionate, here neutral, there intense, but never a tortured loving woman tragically hurried from ecstasy to agony and so to death. The scene of jealousy was fired with passion, and beauties of conception and of method were lavished on the dying scene, but the glove thrown down to Bernhardt and Modjeska in the part was never altogether justified, and the revival enjoyed no more than its deserts in a few nights' run. Miss Gertrude Kingston was to have played the Princesse de Bouillon, but sudden illness forced her to resign in favour of Miss Florence Farr. Mr. Charrington was an effective if ungenial Michonnet; Mr. C. P. Little appeared as the Abbé; and Maurice de Saxe fell to Mr. Herbert Flemming.

Musical Notes.

THE musical season has now set in severely, and during the last few weeks there has been a crowd of concerts and recitals, too numerous in fact for me to do more than briefly mention the majority. On April 29th, Signor Simonetti gave his annual concert at St. James's Hall, a special feature of the performance being his own second sonata for pianoforte and violin, in the rendering of which he was joined by Madame Frickenhaus. Though agreeable in character, the work proved somewhat weak and colourless. The concert-giver was heard to far greater advantage in Mendelssohn's violin concerto, and in his two little pieces "Romance" and "Madrigal." The vocalists were Miss Liza Lehmann and Mr. Eugene Oudin.

THE first of Madame Essipoff's pianoforte recitals attracted a large audience to St. James's Hall on April 3rd. This artist's powers are far too well known to need recapitulation here, so I will merely say that she played, wholly admirably, selections from Schumann, Bach, Rubinstein and Chopin, amongst others.—In the two following recitals, May 9th and 15th, still larger audiences were attracted by this popular and ever welcome pianist.

NEITHER Mr. Isidor Cohn nor Mons. Lennart Lundberg can be said to have made much impression at their recitals given respectively at the St. James's and Steinway Halls. The former pianist is hardly above mediocrity among solo players, while the latter, who is a Swede, and has studied under Madame Dubois in Paris, plays in a somewhat effeminate style.

ON May 4th, Miss Dorothy Hanbury (pupil of Madame Helen Townshend) gave a very pleasant concert at the Prince's Hall. This little lady is rapidly coming into the front rank of reciters, and she is likely to have a brilliant career, providing she does not become spoilt by success. The principal item on the programme was a recital in costume of the dialogue from "King John" (Scene i., Act 4) by the Misses Dorothy and Muriel Hanbury. The former took the part of Arthur really admirably, delivering the lines with spirit and great expression.—With the exception of Senor Sarasate, there are few violinists more deservedly popular at the present day than Mons. Tivadar Nachez, and it is small wonder, therefore, that a large audience was attracted to St. James's Hall on April 6th to the first of his recitals. Mons. Nachez gave a splendid rendering of Mendelssohn's "Concerto," with the composer's pianoforte accompaniment, and a number of minor pieces by Bach, Beethoven and other composers. His superb playing of Handel's "Largo" was received with enthusiastic applause, and deserves special mention. Mr. Lawrence Kellie was the vocalist, and sang several dainty little airs—chiefly of his own composition—most agreeably. Beethoven's "Adelaide," however, was far too heavy for both his voice and style.

MONS. EMILE SAURET gave an extremely interesting concert (the second of the series) at St. James's Hall on April 8th, when he was assisted by several well known instrumentalists. Special interest was centred in Beethoven's Grand Septet (op 20) for Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Contra Bass, Clarinet, Bassoon and Horn, of which a very fine rendering was given. Miss Evangeline Florence sang Mr. Henschel's charming song "Spring," and Mr. Arthur Oswald gave Sullivan's "Edward Grey" to perfection.



MISS KATHLEEN WALTON

MISS KATHLEEN WALTON—a newsoprano—gave a capital concert at the Steinway Hall on May 3rd in aid of a charity. The lady was found to be possessed of a very rich voice of extensive compass. She sang Handel's aria, "Lascia ch'io pianga," with the accompanying recitative, so admirably, as to predict for her a very successful career.—On the same evening at the Portman Rooms, Miss Gertrude Aylward and Miss Grace Vereker gave a very successful concert. They sang respectively—amongst other things—Weber's "Und ob die Wolke" and Glück's "Che Faro" with considerable taste and expression.

MISS NORA HASTINGS may be congratulated on the success of her concert at St. James's Hall on May 10th. This lady is a dramatic reciter of considerable power, and on this occasion she was assisted by several well-known vocalists, including Miss Meredyth Elliott, Madame Valda, Mrs. Mary Davies, Signor Foli, and Mr. Braxton Smith.

Miss Hastings recited with great effect a poem called "The Shipwreck," and also Nesbit's "The Singing of the Magnificat." The musical honours were fairly carried off by Miss Meredyth Elliott, who is without doubt one of the finest contralto singers we have. Her enunciation is perfect, her style finished and artistic, and the voice itself exceedingly rich and sweet, especially in the lower notes. Miss Elliott has a grand career before her.

MADAME GRIMALDI gave her first pianoforte recital on May 9th, and on the 11th Miss Nellie Kauffmann made her *débüt* as a pianist at St. James's Hall. This young lady—who is stated to be English, and is a pupil of Mr. Graham P. Moore, of the Royal College of Music—shows very great promise. On the occasion in question she wore a dress specially designed for her by Mr. Oscar Wilde.

NOT so very long ago Lady Folkstone organised a band of lady instrumentalists, and this idea has evidently been taken up by the Rev. G. H. Moberley, who on May 12th gave a grand concert at St. James's Hall with his string orchestra, consisting of no less than ninety lady performers. The programme was an excellent one, and the band, conducted by Mr. Moberley, played with great spirit and in perfect time. Mrs. Hutchinson sang charmingly as usual, and the whole evening was a most enjoyable one.

THE early stages in learning the piano-forte are naturally very tedious, especially to children. A Miss Maud Hartley, of 3, Porchester Place, W., has invented a system which not only minimises this, but greatly accelerates progress in mastering the theory of music. By this system transposing becomes extremely easy, even to very young beginners. Assisted by three of her little pupils, Miss Hartley gave an exhibition of her system a few days ago at Erard's Recital Rooms. The result was certainly most satisfactory.

IN common with many other people, I am strongly opposed to musical prodigies, and I think parents and guardians, as a rule, are very ill-advised to let children appear in public. Exceptions, however, only prove the rule, and I am bound to make an exception in favour of little Raoul Koczalski, the boy pianist who is only eight years old, and yet has appeared over five hundred times in various Continental concert rooms. This boy is undoubtedly a marvel, and seems to positively revel in tasks which might well tax the powers of matured artists. His rendering of Chopin's "Concerto in F Minor" was wonderful, and the same may be said of his other selections from Bach, Mozart, Rubinstein and Liszt. His own compositions, too, were marked by true poetic feeling. Mr. N. Vert has secured a great attraction in this little artist, and it is only to be hoped that his body will not be worn out by his brain.

ANOTHER prodigy is promised us in Frida Simonson (also eight years old), who will make her *débüt* early in June.—The last recital which I have space to mention is that of Fraulein Eussert, a young lady of sweet sixteen, who made her *débüt* as a pianist at the Prince's Hall on May 5th. Her style is very refined and artistic, and differs considerably from that of the conventional player. While there is

nothing startling to record in her performance as yet, Fraulein Eussert is nevertheless likely in due time to reach the front rank of pianists.

THERE is little to record in the third and fourth Philharmonic Concerts, or in the latest performance of the Royal Choral Society, except—in the latter—to mention Dr. Stanford's Chicago ode, "East to West" (performed before the "Elijah" on April 10th), a capital little work for chorus and orchestra, in the composer's happiest vein.

"JANE ANNIE; OR, THE GOOD CONDUCT PRIZE."

A new and original English comic opera, written by J. M. HARRIE and A. CONAN DOYLE.

Music by ERNEST FORD.

Produced at the Savoy Theatre, Saturday evening, May 13th, 1893.

A Proctor	Mr. R. BARRINGTON.	Jane Annie	Miss DOROTHY VANE.
Slm	Mr. L. GRIDLEY.	Bab.	Miss DECIMA MOORE.
Greg	Mr. W. PASSMORE.	Milly	Miss F. PERRY.
Tom	Mr. C. KENNINGHAM.	Rose	Miss EMMIE OWEN.
Jack	Mr. SCOTT FISKE.	Meg.	Miss JOSE SHALDERS.
Caddle	MASTER H. RIGNOLD.	Maud	Miss MAY BELL.
Miss Sims	Miss R. BRANDAM.		

Nobody, I daresay, sighs more devoutly for the days of Gilbert and Sullivan than Mr. D'Oyly Carte, for no opera at this theatre which has been produced since that memorable series has met with equivalent success. It is a very ungrateful task, however, for any author or composer to follow such a partnership, and with respect to "Jane Annie" special allowance should be made, for it is Mr. Ernest Ford's first important work. First let us look at the "book" of this new opera, for it is generally the weak spot of most comic operas. "Jane Annie," unfortunately, is no exception to the rule, for though the libretto begins well, and in parts is really humorous, as a whole it must be put down as weak, and a trifle dull. The scene is laid in a young ladies' seminary, and the story deals with a proposed elopement of the bad girl Bab, and the powers of hypnotism of the good girl Jane Annie. The seminary is close to a University city, which gives excuse for the introduction of a proctor and his bull-dogs, and also a whole tribe of students. Jane Annie has contrived to obtain two lovers, one a soldier (who in the second act brings a number of fellow officers in the full regimentals of the 17th Lancers) and the other a press student, which enables the authors to mildly satirise the new journalism. Mr. Ford's music is pretty throughout, the orchestration being exceedingly clever. It lacks, however, the true ring of melody or strong originality. Mr. Ford, however, is without doubt a composer of real merit, and his future work will be looked forward to with considerable interest. "Jane Annie" is very ably cast. Mr. Rutland Barrington has a very "fat" part in the Proctor, and makes the most of it; while Miss Brandram, Miss Dorothy Vane, Miss Decima Moore and Mr. Charles Kenningham sing charmingly. The stage management does infinite credit to Mr. Charles Harris.

THE Royal Italian Opera commenced on May 15, at Covent Garden, with "Lohengrin." A very brilliant audience was present on the opening night including the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, the Duke and Duchess of Teck, and the Princess May, but the opening of the season came too late to admit of the various operatic productions being noticed in the present issue.

PERCY NOTCUTT.

Some Amateur Performances.

"A SCRAP OF PAPER" AT BAGSHOT.

If amateurs would but avail themselves of a guiding hand in their productions! If they would but seek the assistance of one well up in the intricacies of Stage-land to point them their way about, how immeasurably they would be the gainers, and oh! what a different thing life would be for their critics! "Sir," said a certain clever stage-manager, briefly dismissing the profuse thanks of an amateur for his valuable advice, "its nothing! I could make an actor out of a broomstick!" Something that would pass for an actor perhaps it would be safer to say, but in the main he was right. At his wizard touch the dry bones will live, the crippled will stand, the halt will run, and those sound in wind and limb will take unto themselves wings. Amateurs won't believe it, though. They can't believe that they stand in need of hints, and so there is an annual waste of conscientious work, intelligence, not to say genuine ability, which amounts to something overwhelming in the course of the year. Now the Bagshot amateurs are not to be compared with the "broomstick." They can boast a lot of promising material, but then it is mostly in the rough, and in that state not of over much value. Mrs. Dashwood and Major Simpson stand least in need of the guiding finger. Mrs. Dashwood relies upon her instinct, and her instinct being uncommonly true, and mated with decided talent, she seldom fails to get her effects. It is the same with Major Simpson. He has a sense of character, and an easy *nonchalance* completes his equipment for the part of Prosper. Excellent, as far as it goes—as the old gentleman ruefully remarked when he had finished his bottle of port—but their work, good as it is, would be just doubled in value with the rough edges smoothed down and hesitancy exchanged for certainty. To overdo the Baron's boorishness is an irresistible temptation to the amateur, and Major Jopp was not more proof against it than the majority, but his outburst of passion later on was highly effective—a really forcible piece of acting. Miss Badeley was over-weighted with Louise. She had not the experience, and her style lacked both breadth and decision. Miss K. Symons had the right idea of Mademoiselle Zenobie, but the study as a whole wanted ripeness and attention to detail. The same remark applies, though in smaller measure, to the Brisemouche of Captain Morrison, who failed to make the most of the old naturalist. Mrs. Paterson and Mr. Laing, too, might have put more playfulness into Mathilde and her boy lover. And all this might have been mended by a master hand.

"TRAGEDY" BY THE HAMPSTEAD A.D.C.

Some mischievous person has had the ear of the Hampstead Club and instilled into them the beauty of self-effacement. A pernicious doctrine which strikes at the root of that last infirmity of the noble (amateur) mind—self-interest. It is not to be encouraged amongst amateur clubs, especially clubs as capable as the Hampstead. Look at the consequences. The revolutionary theory takes root and bears fruit in the shape of "Tragedy." Now there is nothing against Mr. Fawcett's farce, as far as Macready-Burbage is concerned. The seedy but versatile actor is admirable; but the pæans of praise begin and end with him. All that remains is a jumbled background which counts for nothing, and it was to this inglorious fate that the Hampstead Club condemned themselves. However, if, like the majority of martyrs, they were obstinately set upon self-immolation, at least it was to some purpose, for their extremity proved to be Mr. Marshall's opportunity. If they must play back-ground, it was at any rate to someone worthy the sacrifice. Few amateurs are as capable as Mr. Marshall of filling a fore-ground satisfactorily, and Macready-Burbage ranges itself with the best work he has done. It would have been a lesson in artistic proportion to most amateurs and not a few professionals.

For the rest, the cast suggested what they might have done under happier stars. Mr. Capper is always in the spirit of farce. His fund of energy is inexhaustible and he can be relied upon to set a rattling pace. Messrs. Biggs and Kingston followed suit, and so, at some distance in the rear, did Messrs. Saltmarsh and Wild. Without for a moment yielding support to the ridiculous assertion that the feminine mind is deficient in humour, I am fain to admit that their humour is not for the most part of the farcical quality. Take Mrs. Evans and Miss Chester, for instance. Charming comedy-actresses both of them, but for the most part perplexed and embarrassed when it comes to the breathless bustle of farce. Well, the sacrifice was nobly done on the part of the club, but to this word of praise I would add the rider supplied by the Irish jury when they brought the prisoner in "not guilty"—don't do it again. Cultivate a little healthy selfishness. "In Honour Bound" discovered Mrs. Evans and Mr. Dawson-Milward as Lady Carlyon and her astute husband, both of them over-inclined to wear their hearts on their sleeve, in defiance of the author's intention. Miss Fox and Mr. Brown made something of the lovers.

"GRIFFITH MURDOCH" BY THE WHITTINGTON CLUB.

Dramatists are such wags nowadays, that one is a little nervous about passing judgment on such a play as "Griffith Murdoch." Did the author mean it to be taken seriously, or was it just a huge joke on his part, an experiment to measure the swallowing capacity of an audience at an invitation amateur performance. Was it a genuine attempt at psychological drama, or was it a bit of drollery at the expense of hereditary insanity as depicted on the stage? Who shall say? "It made a dreadfully ugly child, but it makes rather a handsome pig," remarked Alice of "Wonderland" fame concerning the Duchess' startling offspring, and if the unrestrained laughter of the audience at St. George's Hall went for anything, it proved that though, regarded as a drama, Mr. Spiers' work might leave a good deal to be desired, it was unexceptionable as a mirth provider. And it takes a lot before an audience can be brought to see that. As a rule they make it a point of honour to stifle their sense of humour or devote it without reserve to the legitimate demands made upon it by the play and players. A smile or a chuckle at the expense of either is promptly and guiltily suppressed. But laughter, like murder, will out sometimes, and the Whittington audience laughed Jaques-fashion, *sans* intermission, for close upon three hours by the clock. But no, strictly speaking, it was not *sans* intermission. As the lunatic villain with a fancy for transferring his birthright of insanity to the shoulders of his cousin and rival, Mr. Dickinson stood in the breach. The cause might be hopeless, nay, lost, but he was undaunted. For him no throwing up the sponge after the fashion of some of his comrades. It was really a stirring sight to watch him with teeth set and shoulders squared going through with his task, by sheer force compelling the attention of his audience and quelling them into silence. For the rest, the air became impregnated with humour and spread from the audience to the actors. Mrs. Evans did her best with the luckless heroine, but it is difficult to be harrowing in the face of laughter. Mrs. Pryce Hamer had one or two telling moments and made the most of them, but Miss Alexes Leighton's valuable services were completely thrown away. Miss Mary Stuart and Mr. Clark as an amorous spinster and a nervously hypochondriacal gentleman contrived to pull off the honours in a scene so comic that I am forced to the conclusion that the author is not wholly destitute of a sense of humour. Mr. Moore was unremarkable as the injured hero, and Mr. Dutton really unhappy as the gentleman with a past.

"THE MAGISTRATE" BY THE WEST LONDON DRAMATIC CLUB.

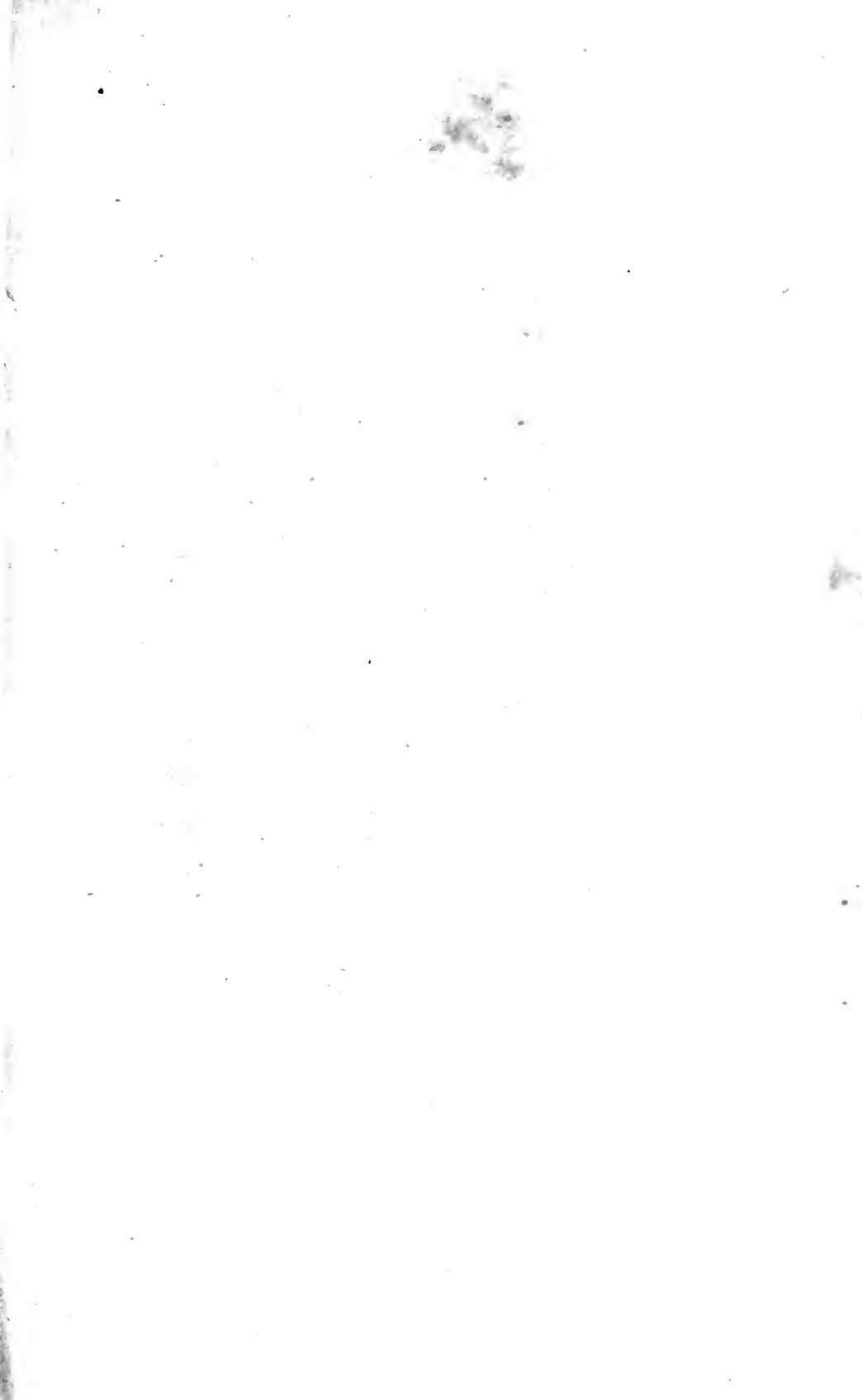
It was bound to come! Mr. Pinero's popular farce has been enjoying such an unprecedented run of luck that experience whispered there would be a bad spill before we heard the last of it. And it came. That amateurs can play this best of farces has been proved to demonstration by the Canterbury Stagers, the Windsor Strollers, and the Romany and Whittington Clubs. That they can play it without rehearsal is less of an assured fact, yet this apparently was the goal the West Londoners had in view. The result to the play may be imagined. Instead of gliding along on well-oiled wheels it resolutely stuck, and was not to

be moved save by spasmodic and vigorous jerks. Rehearsal, and plenty of it, would have made the performance quite another matter, though it would never have taken its place beside the more successful productions. The cast would have negatived that. As a matter of fact the West Londoners should never have dreamed of staging it. The cast was beyond them. Sound and reliable actors as they are, Nature never intended Mr. Cahill and Mr. Teversham for the sorely-tried magistrate and his impish step-son, and you can't fly in the face of Nature with impunity. They couldn't reconcile themselves to their parts. They were—to make use of one of Mr. Jerome's similes—awkward and shifty “as a music-hall lion comique would be without his opera hat.” The support was, for the most part, harmless if unremarkable. Mr. Damer Dawson, at his best in the third act, made an irascible Lukyn. A realistic wetting saved the Horace Vale of Mr. Dicketts, who would have profited by a few hints in the part. Mr. Moore, though scarcely unctuous enough for Wyke, contrived to be effective. Mr. Kenyon Bright made a plausible Blond, and stuck to his accent, which was more than Mr. Graves succeeded in doing—though that was the only fault to be urged against his obsequious waiter. Mrs. Ernest Renton gave expression to Mrs. Posket's distress, though not well-suited in some respects for the part, and Miss Liddiard was fairly spirited as Charlette.

“THE MAGISTRATE” BY THE COMEDY CLUB.

“One woe doth tread upon another's heels,” and the Comedy Club followed hard upon the West Londoners. A wail arises over them too, but, let me hasten to add, in smaller measure. To begin with, they worked better together. They showed signs of more preparation. If there were moments when the play dragged it never came to an actual standstill, and there wasn't a yawn to be collected in the audience which overflowed the Streatham Town Hall. For more than two-thirds of the play Mr. Colley Salter took care of that. Mr. Salter is irresistible. Whatever he elects to play, he reaps a rich crop of laughter. The audience—perhaps wisely—do not look at the why and the wherefore of a part, all they ask is to laugh, and laugh heartily, and Mr. Salter amply satisfied their requirements in Mr. Pinero's farce. But did they see Posket—the Man, the Magistrate, and the Martyr? Some of us were startled out of our self-complacency a short time ago by the information that we were poor, deluded dolts if we fancied we were hearing Shakespeare when we visited the Lyceum. I am equally doubtful as to Mr. Salter's Magistrate. It was admirably adapted to his own unctuous method, but what would Mr. Pinero have said to it? Mr. Milton Cooper was but a shadowy Cis, though he put some briskness into his work. Mr. Gilligan managed Lukyn's third act very fairly, but he too tottered under the weight of the second, which was saved by Mrs. Renton alone. Amateurs seem to find that second act a regular *pons asinorum*. Mr. Browne has too heavy a touch for Vale. That completes the cast as far as the principals are concerned, but, as a matter of fact, it proved to be the day of small things. It was in the minor parts that merit was to be found—in the Blonde of Mr. Sharpe, the Isidor of Mr. Davies, and the Wormington of Mr. Channing. Mr. London did justice to Wyke's lines, but it takes an actor like Mr. Trollope to show what can be made of the part. In his hands it stood out as one of the best things in the play. But then where would another such amateur be found to play it? Given his capacity, they would sniff at anything short of the magistrate himself.







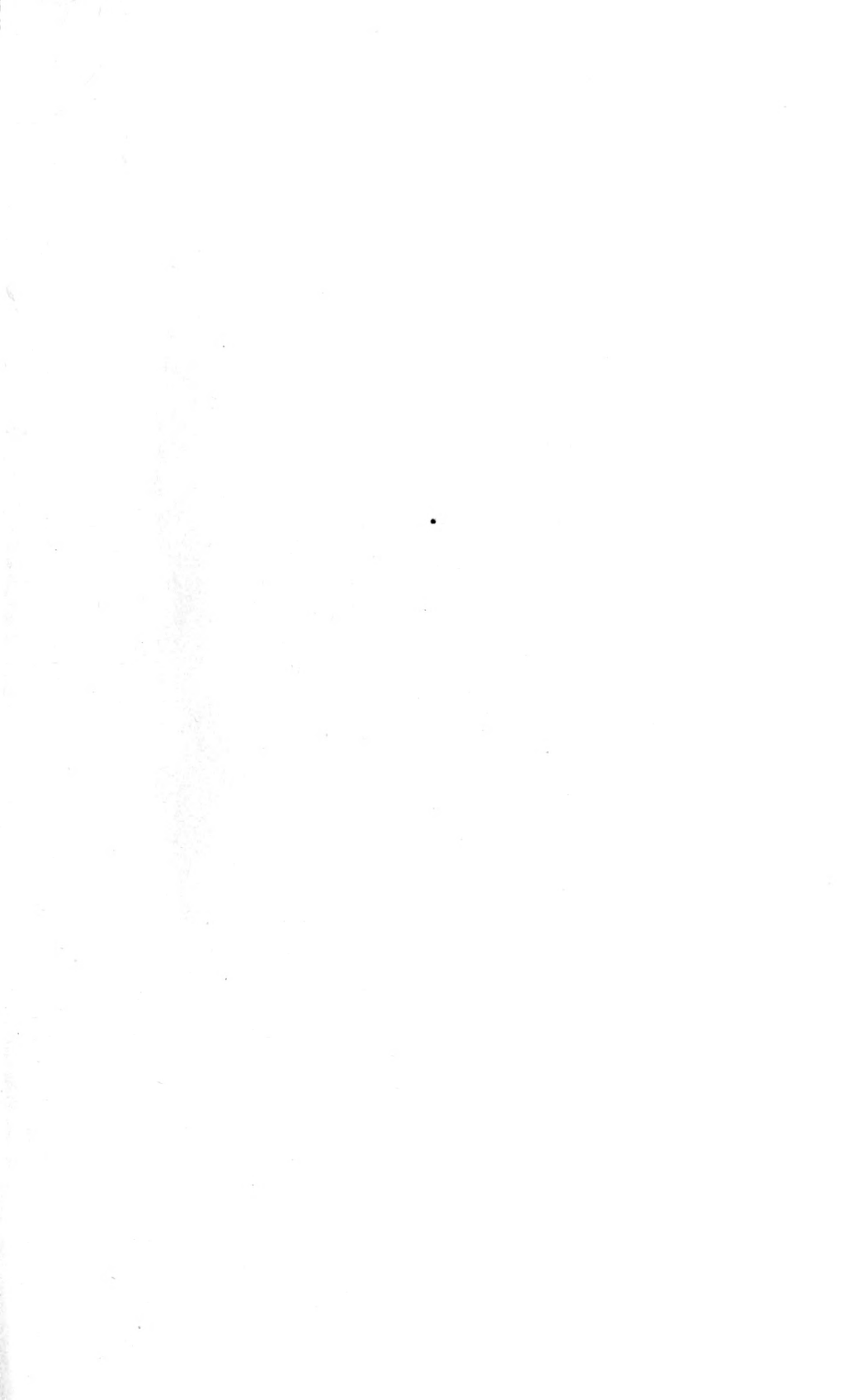
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MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL,
AS CLARICE BERTON, in "THE BLACK DOMINO."

"From seeming evil still educing good."

THOMSON'S "SEASONS."





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MR. ARTHUR ELWOOD.

"A proper man as one shall see in a summer's day."

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, Act I.

Notes of the Month.

MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL (the subject of one of our portraits this month), has leapt into prominence and popularity with the suddenness of a Miss Julia Neilson or a Mr. Rider Haggard. In June, 1890, she was an amateur, playing Marie de Fontanges in "Plot and Passion," and known to few beyond that limited circle to whom the "Anomalies" of West Norwood are more than a name. In June, 1893, she is chosen from among the leading English actresses to fill the post of honour in Mr. Alexander's notable St. James's company, and, higher distinction still, to play the tragic heroine by whom Mr. Pinero's fame as a great dramatist will stand. "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" will not, however, be Mrs. Campbell's introduction to its author. In November, 1889, she played Millicent Boycott in "The Money Spinner," and impelled a writer in THE THEATRE to declare that, notwithstanding his vivid remembrance of Mrs. Kendal in the part, there was much in Mrs. Campbell's rendering to commend, "much of strenuous effort and courage and womanliness, that exercised a great influence over her audience." Before this, Mrs. Campbell had secured a flattering local success as Alma Blake in "The Silver Shield," to which slap-dash person, however, her subdued and gentle style hardly permitted her to give suitable expression. A *matinée* of "As You Like It" two years ago introduced Mrs. Campbell to the London public. She received great encouragement from the critics as a body, and lavish praise from Mr. Clement Scott, whose ardent eulogy perhaps induced Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Sims to offer the actress the leading part, *Astræa*, in "The Trumpet Call," in August, 1891. Her success was instant and emphatic. Her style was acclaimed as intellectual, and a roseate future was foreshadowed for one who could in an evening wean the Adelphines to semi-sympathetic villainy. Louder praise and predictions of a yet more brilliant future, rewarded her pathetic picture of Elizabeth Cromwell in "The White Rose" in April 1892, a still longer stride to the front being taken with Tress Purvis in "The Lights of Home" in September, 1892, and the extreme value of her severely restrained style becoming once more apparent in Clarice Berion in "The Black Domino," which part Mrs. Campbell resigns in order to test her capacity for the higher drama in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray."

MR. ARTHUR ELWOOD (the subject of the companion picture) has for many years filled a prominent position on the London stage, though not until the coming of the New Drama may he be said to have truly found his *métier* and taken the place that is his by right. Appearing first in 1872 at the old Prince of Wales's as a club-man in "Money," Mr. Elwood served three years in stock companies in the country, and then played in succession at the Haymarket, St. James's, Princess's and Olympic. He was a member of Mr. Irving's company from 1878 to 1881, toured with Mrs. Langtry in the States in 1883 and 1884, joined Messrs. Hare and Kendal in "Mayfair" in 1885, toured with them and with Miss Fortescue in 1886 to 1888,

and during recent years has been associated with Mr. Willard at the Shaftesbury, Mr. Wyndham at the Criterion and Miss Robins at the Vaudeville. Villains by the score and heroes by the dozen have fallen to his lot at almost every theatre west of Temple Bar, and to everyone he has lent some dignity or distinction, but only of late years have his refinement and extreme naturalness been appreciated at their proper worth. His curious and well-nigh unique power of, so to speak, haughtily claiming respect for not very respectable people was demonstrated in his Captain Redwood in "Jim the Penman." The commonplace spy and the commonplace melodrama of his rather skunkish doings were sublimated by the actor's unusual skill and method, and Mr. Elwood shared with Mr. Willard the honour of getting the flashy play regarded as a transcript from life. This part did not, however, call the actor's finest qualities into action. It was reserved for Dr. Ibsen to do this, with Ejler Lovborg in "Hedda Gabler" on its production at the Vaudeville two years ago. Opinions might, and did, differ as to Mr. Elwood's conception of the wayward genius, but on all sides the execution was pronounced subtle and masterly in the extreme. Universal praise was also showered upon him for a remarkable performance of a society loungeur, in whom chivalry is not yet dead, in Mr. Haddon Chambers' disappointing drama "The Hon. Herbert." The character offered scope for all Mr. Elwood's artistic virtues—his suggestion of moral strength, his admirable self-restraint, his dignity, his manly note of deep feeling—and in parts like this it may be questioned whether he has any equal on the English stage.

WAVE after wave of depression has engulfed managers, actors, plays and theatres during the past month, and not half a dozen enterprises have stood the shock unshaken. Mr. Irving and Mr. Tree alone have experienced the joy of crowded houses night by night and week by week. Mr. Tree has secured a sound "Society" success in Mr. Wilde's variously estimated distortion of select existence, and "Becket," flanked by "Louis XI." and "The Lyons Mail," more than suffices for the wants of the Lyceum. Elsewhere the tale however is in general a mournful one. But if the theatre is seemingly losing its hold in one direction, in another it retains it, and publishers exhibit unusual activity in putting out books by, or concerning, actors and the stage.

FIRST among the publications of the month stands "The Twilight of Love," a collection of "four studies of the Artistic Temperament," by Mr. C. H. E. Brookfield. Testimony has never been wanting to the literary aptitude and wit of this once prominent member of the Haymarket Company. So unimpeachable an authority even as Mr. Oscar Wilde has it is understood borne witness—not perhaps with the best of grace—to the intellectual competence of the author of "The Poet and the Puppets." Yet it is doubtful if the Stage will be the prouder for this new exercise of observation, ingenuity, and imagination, on the part of one of its children. For, written in between the lines, on almost every page, is a terrible indictment of the art which more than any other fosters this same "artistic temperament."

MR. BROOKFIELD looks upon the stage world and sees that it is not fair. His eyes distinguish nothing of that fair prospect which Miss

Terry, Mrs. Kendal and Mrs. Bancroft have so often dwelt upon. Selfishness, meanness, and immorality jostle one another, wherever he turns his gaze. There is scarce anything within his view that is not sordid, vulgar, despicable. The women, with two exceptions, "have tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge" or "been occasionally a little too good-natured," while still on the threshold of life. His men are passable, if in the army, but if on the boards unspeakable. In fact, anybody who has anything at all to do with the theatre, or the artistic temperament, sooner or later presents a most unlovely spectacle. The one dramatic critic is "Mr. Blackmell," and those whom he criticises look like "unfrocked priests" or "discharged clerks." Of dignity, of worthy ambition, of art, there is never a trace. The stage door, if Mr. Brookfield's view be correct, merely masks from the happy ignorant a hell of all that is degrading, horrible and vile. His victims are only less reprehensible than the monsters who betray and destroy them. Not one bright ray illumines the distressing gloom of these four studies. Even when the theme is comedy, it is but comedy of the Gilbertian kind, leaving a bitter taste in the mouth. And the last page is hailed with a sigh of relief.

THE mischief of it is that Mr. Brookfield's cleverness is undeniable. His men and women breathe an atmosphere of actuality. They all appear to have sat for their portraits. And worst of all, the manner in which they are presented induces an uncomfortable sense that in showing us them, the author has shown us all: that his studies of the "artistic temperament" are complete; and that everyone possessing it is beyond measure cursed, if not indeed removed by virtue of it beyond the pale of humanity.

WITH Mr. Bernard Shaw's "Widowers' Houses" the Independent Theatre series of published plays makes a notable beginning. Well padded out with a preface by Mr. J. T. Grein, in which the Founder hopes (surely against hope!) that "the series will become a household word," by an intensely humorous "early history of the play" by Mr. William Archer, a few interesting passages from the private life of Mr. Shaw, an *apologia pro vita sua* as critic and as dramatist, and a very handsome trouncing of his once triumphant but now pelted and pilloried detractors—ranging from *The Times* to Mr. Ben Greet—it provides in its printed form an evening's amusement out of all proportion to that it furnished as an acted play. Mr. Shaw himself pronounces the last word when he says, "It is saturated with the vulgarity of the life it represents; the people do not speak nobly, live gracefully, or sincerely face their own position; the author is not giving expression in pleasant fancies to the underlying beauty and romance of happy life, but dragging up to the smooth surface of 'respectability' a handful of the slime and foulness of its polluted bed and playing off your laughter at the scandal of the exposure against your shudder at its blackness." And this must be borne in mind together with our recommendation of the play (*plus* bulky prefaces and bulkier appendices) as an interesting if cheerless addition to the literature of the stage.



Received for Review.

BOOKS.

Henry Irving. A record of twenty years at the Lyceum. By Percy Fitzgerald, M.A. (Chapman & Hall). 14s.

The Twilight of Love. By C. H. E. Brookfield. (Ward & Downey). 3s. 6d.

Widowers' Hours. Independent Theatre Play. By G. Bernard Shaw. (Henry & Co.) 2s. 6d.

Shakespeare's Hamlet Interpreted. By Mark Knights. (Jarrold & Sons). 3s. 6d.

A Player's Tragedy. By H. Hamilton Fyfe. (A. D. Innes & Co.) 1s.

MUSIC.

BOOSEY & CO., 295, Regent Street, W.—“Sleep My Beloved,” by Hope Temple : “Spring,” by G. Henschel : “The Mandarin,” by Ernest Birch : “Queen of My Days,” by Ellen Wright : “The Silver Path,” by Frederick Bevan : “Darkies’ Serenade,” by Ernest Bucalossi : “It’s Gone” (plantation song), by Alfred Scott Gatty.

W. MORLEY & CO., 127, Regent Street, W.—“When Love’s Afar,” by G. Francis Lloyd : “Hosanna in Excelsis,” by Ed. St. Quentin : “Dearie,” by G. Francis Lloyd.

THE LONDON MUSIC PUBLISHING CO., (LTD.), 7, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET, W.—“Daisy” (gavotte), by R. N. Tovey : “The Lilly” (gavotte), by J. H. Wilkinson : “Dream Memories” (song), by Lindsay Lennox : “Summer Days” (intermezzo), by Charles R. Fisher : “Dream Memories” (waltz), by Theo. Bonheur.



New Plays

Produced and performed at the Theatre in London from April 20th to May 10th, 1906.—

(Reveries are marked thus:—)

- April 20th "The Lion & Mail," adapted by the late Charles Reade. Lyceum.
 "Scholar & Maids," comedietta in one act by E. E. Kennedy. Victoria Town Hall.
 "Katie," comedy, in three acts, by J. M. Hawthorne. Trafalgar Square.
 "African Love-letter," play in four acts, adapted by Henry Herman. Regatta.
 "Jealous in Honour," play in four acts by Basil Brown. Garrick.
 "A Luggard in Love," farce in one act by Robert Llewellyn. Trafalgar Square.
 "A Star Turn," a "revue," by "Harlowe Llewellyn," music by M. J. Morris. Trafalgar Square.
 "Blat & Wife," a study in three scenes. Author manuscript. Terry's Independent Theatre Society's performance.
 "Theory and Practice," a dialogue, by Arthur Bennett. Terry's.
 May 2nd "Mr. Lyons," comedietta, by W. J. Lister and Gertrude Lister. Trafalgar Square.
 "Humbury," sketch in one act by Joseph Harton. Lyceum.
 "The King," farce in one act by T. E. Griffin. St. George's Hall.
 "Man and Machine," musical comedy in three acts by R. H. Burt. Melba and Albert Hall.
 "Diplomacy," travesty in one scene by F. J. Bernard. Trafalgar Square.
 "Forbidden Fruit," farce in three acts by Miss Bowditch. Vauxhall.
 "Time Will Tell," comedy by Herbert Gardner. Trafalgar Square.
 "The Great Ungrat," farce in three acts by Fred. Horner. Comedy.
 "Justice," play in one act by Mrs. J. Denning.
 "Jane Anne," or "The Good Goodbye," opera, words by J. H. Barrie and Conna Doyle. music by Ernest Ford.
 "Dinah," play in one act by G. Thompson and E. H. H. H. St. George's Hall.
 "Mythology Run Mad," a "medley," in a prologue and two acts by Theo. Moore and Ernest Renna. Westminster Town Hall.

In the Provinces from April 10th to May 10th, 1906.—

- April 10th "Lively Hall," comic opera in three acts by John G. Dunlop. music by Mrs. Brown and Mr. Trevelyan. Dover Hall Plymouth.
 "The Wholly Hall," play in one act by Walter J. Georgian. Public Hall, Weymouth.
 "Warrior," a military comedy drama in two acts written by Alfred Saville and composed by Edward Lurie. Leicester Hall, Ipswich.
 "My Lady & Maid," comedy in three acts by Henry Harrison. Prince of Wales, Liverpool.
 "The Lass of Richmond Hill," comic opera in two acts by Harry Trevor. music by Benjamin Horner. Theatre Royal, Richmond.
 "The Year," play in three acts by Charles Hadden. Theatre Royal, Weymouth.
 "In the Eye of the Law," drama in four acts by J. Knowles. Prince's Theatre, Portsmouth.
 "The Favourite," musical farce in one act by Margaret Lee. music by Geo. J. Chesterton. Crystal Palace.

- April 24 "La Cigale," comic opera, in three acts, by M. Audran. Grand.
 „ 25 "Our Last Rehearsal," musical comedy, by Mrs. Perry; music by Alfred Oake. Pleasure Gardens Theatre, Folkestone.
 „ 27 "Light," an idyll, in one act, by Lionel Dalton. Victoria Hall, Bayswater.
 „ 27 "The Magnet," fantastic farce, in three acts, by Lionel Dalton. Victoria Hall, Bayswater.
 May 1^o "The Lost Paradise," by C. De Mille. Grand.
 „ 8^o "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," by the late Tom Taylor. Guards' Theatricals, Chelsea.
 „ 11 "In a Telegraph Office," comedietta, in one act, by Mrs. Hugh Bell. Parish Hall, Sloane Square.
 „ 11 "Between the Posts," comedietta, in one act, by Mrs. Hugh Bell. Parish Hall, Sloane Square.
 „ 11 "A Joint Household," comedietta, in one act, by Mrs. Hugh Bell. Parish Hall, Sloane Square.
 „ 16 "The Ocean Waif," drama, in five acts, by Grace Temple and H. M. Le Blonde. St. James' Theatre, Wrexham.

In Paris, from April 8th to May 12th, 1893 :—

- April 15 "L'Homme à L'Oreille Cassée," drama, in three acts, by MM. Pierre Decourelle and Antony Mars. Gymnase.
 „ 15^o "L'Héritage de M. Plumet," comedy, in three acts, by MM. Théodore Barrière and Ernest Capendu. Odéon.
 „ 17 "Corignan Contre Corignan," vaudeville, in three acts, by MM. Georges Rolle and Jean Gascogne. Théâtre Cluny.
 „ 20 "L'Anicroche," comedy, in one act, by M. Soulié. Vaudeville.
 „ 20 "Ce qu'on doit Taïre," in one act, by M. Artus. Vaudeville.
 „ 20 "Deux Tourtereaux," in one act, by MM. P. Ginisty and G. Guérin. Vaudeville.
 „ 21 "Le Sous Prefet de Chateau Buzard," comedy-vaudeville, in three acts, by M. Léon Gandillot. Palais-Royal.
 „ 27 "Valet de Cœur, comedy, in three acts, by M. Maurice Vaucaire. Menus-Plaisirs. (Théâtre Libre.)
 „ 27 "Boubouroche," vaudeville, in two acts, by M. Georges Courteline. Théâtre Libre.
 May 5 "Mademoiselle Ma Femme," operetta, in three acts, by MM. Ordonneau and Pradels; music by M. F. Toulmouche.
 „ 6 "La Reine Juana," drama, in five acts, by M. Alexandre Parodi. Français.
 „ 12 "La Valkyrie," lyrical drama, in three acts, by Richard Wagner. French version by the late Victor Wilder. Opéra.



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